MONTANA

the magazine of western history



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Published quarterly at Roberts and 6th Ave., Helena, as the only magazine of general interest sanctioned by the State of Montana. Subscriptions, which include membership in the Society, are \$4 per year; \$7 for two years; \$10 for three years. Because of the continuity of subject matter it is recommended that subscription be on a calendar year basis although this is not necessary. Single copies may be purchased at leading newstands and bookstores. Some back issues are usually available here. We check facts but can not assume responsibility for statements and interpretations which are wholly the author's. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless postage is provided. This magazine is entered as second class matter at the post office, Helena, Montana. Publication dates are January, April, July and October. For change of address, please notify at least 30 days in advance of the next issue.







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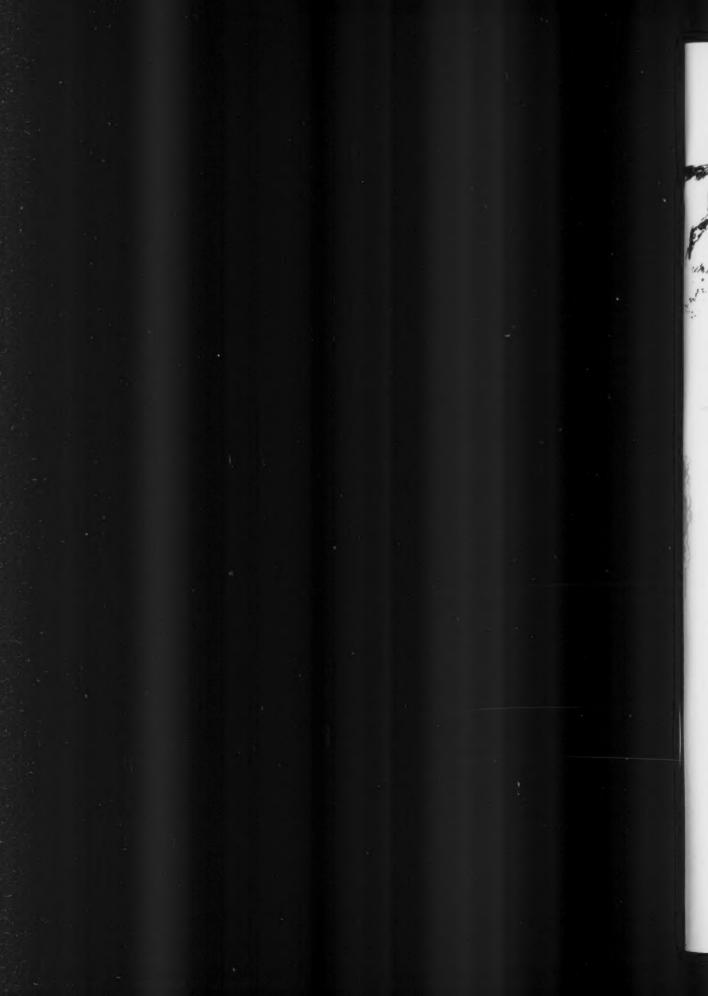
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WESTERNER

AN INTRODUCTION

By K. Ross Toole

A S CHARLEY Russell's good friend, Con Price, once wrote, "I often wonder if any of us really knew what was down inside the man. I myself, as only one among thousands that knew and loved him, feel I knew very little about his nature." It is perhaps true of all of us that we think we know more about our friends than we do in fact. But Russell's "posthumous friends," particularly in the West, are legion and apparently ageless.

It is our purpose to present new and little-known material here which will reveal something more of the time, and of the depth, breadth and deeper dimensions of the character of an uncommon man—Charles M. Russell, the cowboy artist of Montana—than has yet appeared in print. The subject is worthy, indeed, of many special editions.

It has been with no spirit of malice that the "posthumous friends" mentioned above have wrought myth and legend, which in truth perform a disservice to the man and to the era he portrayed. Charles Marion Russell would probably have resisted the effort to elevate him to the status of Titian, or of an enshrined and great American, far more determinedly than he would set himself against a handful of small-minded detractors who hack away, even today, at the roots of his reputation with little axes of jealousy.

Perspective alone, we think, reveals that he was a remarkable human being—a fact which neither analysis nor criticism will change very much. Art and art forms change and it is proper that they do. But for a short time, as time goes, there lived in the Old West this unusually perceptive and gentle man who happened to understand and to be able to portray the dying days of an era which was both elemental and free.

Toward the end of the 19th Century, when the frontier as a geographical concept was vanishing, when a whole basic American phenomenon which had held sway since the 17th Century was flickering out, there were few indeed who marked its passing. It was, in a sense, a lingering death.

There were still vast unsettled spaces on the Northern Great Plains, particularly in Montana. There were vistas where the sky came down the same distance all around, but as a place of free land in unlimited quantities, a place beyond the law, a place where neither Congress nor any power save the power of the individual man himself could reach, the old Frontier West was gone. It didn't go with fanfare or eulogies. It just slipped away. That is why not more than a handful of men in the entire United States noted or commented on its passing. The *entire* artistic production of Charles M. Russell is an eternal commentary on the end of a great and important American experience.



That is precisely why his works will endure and, indeed, increase steadily in value. That is why those who insist that Russell was "merely an illustrator," provincially isolated in far-off Montana Territory, demonstrate that they have neither studied his work, pondered the reason for his startling popularity, nor grasped his monumental impact in the field of Western Americana.

Most people who love Russell's work have trouble explaining precisely why. Some say it is because of its fidelity as to landscape or color or fact. Others say it is because nobody could draw a horse as well as Russell. Some believe it was because he could paint "action" so well. But they are only really describing incidentals and by-products.



The real power of Russell's work does not reside in technique. It resides in the fact that he felt, to the very depths of his being, that an era was dying—and that it meant something. He always approached the subject obliquely, but he never strayed far from the theme. He had been a part of the era, not as an observer but as a participant. And he understood it. He chronicled it and its death. And C.M.R. did so with a mixture of sadness, humor and violence that no acute observer can miss in his work. Above all, he did it honestly.

Given this depth of feeling, given this understanding and perception about his times and place, and given real talent with pen, brush and clay, you have in Charles M. Russell an artist, not an illustrator. Now add to such qualities: gentleness, geniality and loyalty and you have an uncommon man doing an uncommon task.

No one should ever judge Charlie Russell by one or two of his paintings or even a cursory look at many of them.

One certainly should never judge him by reprints, which are almost always off-key. Nor should he be judged by technique alone. The impact lies in a close look at many of his original works in all of his major techniques.

Known as a painter of violent action, you will find that some of Russell's most compelling works are compelling precisely because of a startling *lack* of action. Two utterly motionless mounted Indians, for example, looking down at the tracks of a wagon in the tall grass. Again and again his theme was portent, not action.



As for his humor, both in his paintings and writings, man's inhumanity to man is the core of it. In this regard Charlie Russell would instinctively have understood what Al Capp was talking about when he said that the root of most humor is found in cruelty. Russell also found a root of humor in sadness. Notice how often pathos is an integral part of his humor. Seek out the painting of a mounted cowboy on a cold and bleak Christmas Day holding aloft a bottle of booze while Santa and his sleigh appear across the sky in the background. Because of subtle caricature, because of incongruity, your first reaction is to laugh. When you look again it is merely sad.

Those who know more than a little about the subject are weary of the glib analysis of Russell and his work, either by the pseudo-abstractionists or by the clay-footed 20th Century cowboy. Both use, and have used, Russell for their own purposes and neither approach him objectively or thoughtfully. But regardless of his critics on the one hand or his maudlin defiers on the other, Russell's work will endure and increase in value as time passes.



Charles Marion Russell was an immensely fortunate man.

Very few men have the opportunity to live their dreams.

Russell did it for nearly twenty years after 1880.

Most of us are truly inarticulate—at least what we feel most deeply we fail to express without groping. Not so with Russell.

What he felt most deeply he expressed with skill and finality.

Most of us cannot stand off and understand our times.

Russell could and did. And very few of us are widely beloved.

Charles M. Russell was—as the material which follows should clearly attest.





Great American Artist C. M. R.

A comparative analysis by the famous biographer of major Western artists,

HAROLD McCRACKEN

HAROLD McCRACKEN is recognized as one of the foremost American experts in the field of Western art and artists. A biographer of the first rank, he has produced the definitive works on the lives of Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell, the greatest of all Western American artists.

Mr. McCracken, who now lives on Long Island, was born and grew up in the West. An internationally known explorer and naturalist, he has to his credit twenty-three books, some of them dealing with Alaska and the frozen North, and many of them about the Frontier West.

His most formidable work, "The Charles M. Russell Book," was published last year by Doubleday and Company. Twenty-five years in the making, this magnificent volume is the largest and best published collection of Russell's works, containing thirty-five full-color paintings, many of them double-page spreads, plus over 180 of his pen and ink drawings.

Aside from its value as a collection of Russell art, this is also a complete and colorfully written biography of the artist himself, exploring the many facets of his personality.



HARLIE RUSSELL has become well Jestablished as one of America's great artists. Such an important claim, made for him or any individual, naturally calls for something more than the mere statement. In addition to its substantiation, it also really requires an explanation of what a claim of this kind can be based upon. Great art is a very intangible thing. It has a wide range of forms of expression, and, fortunately, it has an equally wide range of appreciation. There must be, however, some basic qualities which distinguish the work of a master, and difficult as this quality has always been to define, probably the best yardstick of evaluation can be found in the following simple formula: Great art is that art which very strongly appeals to a very large number of intelligent people over a very long period of time. It takes time, and considerably more than professional critics, to give real greatness to any creative work-and this can be taken pretty generally. It is by such a standard that the work of Montana's cowboy artist certainly qualifies, not only

in the field of graphic art, but as a sculptor, a rustic poet and philosopher, and as a writer. Montana has made no mistake in choosing to place an heroic statue of this man to represent their state in National Statuary Hall in the nation's capitol.

The story of Charles M. Russell shows an interesting paradox in the field of American arts and letters, and at the same time gives strong evidence that genius sometimes follows a strange path to great heights. It is now almost a hundred years since Charlie was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on March 19. 1864. His family was a prosperous and sedate one, deeply involved in a well established manufacturing enterprise. which showed promise of growing into an industrial combine of large proportions. It seemed a foregone conclusion that the Russell boy would have the benefits of a good college education and would then take his place in the management of the family's business enterprise. But from early boyhood Charlie was a kind of provocative throw-back to

The Illustrations:

Page 6, top: This fine photograph of Charles M. Russell at work in his log studio in Great Falls was taken six years before his death. He is working on "The Salute of the Robe Trade," now hung in the Gilcrease Institute. Tulsa, Okla. The photograph was presented to the Historical Society of Montana by Edgar Peterson, and an impressive enlargement of it is featured in the beautiful C. M. Russell Gallery in Great Falls.

Left: A familiar photographic study of the artist.

Right: This unusual and early watercolor is a self-portrait of Russell at work in his cabin in Cascade, Montana, with an Indian friend looking on. It was found on the floor of the cabin by Russell's good friend, Ben Roberts. A photograph of this scene was presented to the Historical Society of Montana by Roberts' daughter. It might be added that it was at the Roberts home in Cascade that Russell met his future wife, Nancy.



an earlier and far more exciting generation. There was extraordinary pioneer blood in his veins. His grandmother's four brothers, on his own mother's side, had greatly distinguished themselves in the early fur trade and the pioneer history of the West. They were William, Charles, George and Robert Bent, and the most celebrated of these was William Bent, who in 1832 built the first trading post on the Arkansas River and became the first permanent white settler of what is today the State of Colo-"Bent's Fort" was in Charlie's youth already one of the most famous and glamorous names in the story of hectic life at the outer edge of the Great Plains. There is little wonder that "Uncle William" became the principal hero of Russell's boyish dreams; and before long the lad steadfastly determined to spend his own life in the still "wild" West. He would have no part of even the most elementary of educational routines, or interest in any aspect of the family business.



At the age of thirteen, Charlie ran away from school and home and stayed for a time among the contagious influences of the St. Louis waterfront, where the river boats, wagon trains and steam trains were loading supplies and men in answer to the call of "Go West Young Man." Gold and fur were still magic words, with all the connotations of adventure and fortune. There had also appeared in the western scene a new type of individual, who was completely capturing the fancy and the fertile imagination of a youngster like Charlie Russell. Here was a character as virile,



colorful and distinctively dramatic as the scout, mountain man, or any of the earlier day paragons of frontier knighthood and he was a little of all of them rolled together—Indian fighter, gunman, vigilante, and pioneer. He was the *cowboy*—and Charlie Russell decided definitely, that this was to be his own life's career.

Along with young Russell's obsession to live the life of the West, he also showed unmistakable signs of having artistic tendencies, for he was continually drawing pictures and modeling little figures in clay or soap, of the people and scenes which impressed him. This was a talent which had very little inheritance from his family background and no one took it seriously. The slight effort which Charlie's parents made to find a local art teacher was little more than an effort to encourage the slightest proclivity in something urbane and sedate. But Charlie had no time for even this. The only thing of real importance was to get started on his life of adventure. And so, in mid-March of 1880, just a few days before his sixteenth birthday, Charlie Russell left home and started out for Montana Territory.

The story of how "Kid" Russell became what is probably the most famous of all the bona fide old-time Montana cowboys has become both history and legend. There were, however, some extraordinary aspects of this rough side of his life, which had a fateful bearing upon his finding a far more distinguished fame as an artist and documentarian. There were also some extraordinary aspects to his character, which make him one of the most colorful personalities in the field of American arts and letters.

Circumstances beyond the choice or control of this green young kid from St. Louis, took him into the beautiful Judith Basin, in the central part of the present State of Montana. Fate even started him out with all the handicaps and popular stigma of becoming a sheepherder. On the other hand, life in the Judith had all the lingering aspects of the old frontier-renegade Indian troubles, outlaws, vigilantes, buffalc hunters with a rich background of more exciting days, gold miners and all the rest. Furthermore, young Russell arrived just at the time when the Judith was beginning to develop into one of the most colorfully dramatic cattle and cowboy areas in the whole Northwest.

To break into and follow the career of a professional cowboy, in the early



have that special knack. Strangely enough, he never acquired the ability to become a good cowboy. About the best grade he ever made was that of a lowly night herder. By design or fateful providence, "Kid" Russell became a ragged and extremely colorful sort of camp jester of the cattle round-up gatherings. After night-herding from dusk to dawn, even in the worst of weather, he would



1880's in Montana Territory—even without the handicap of being marked as a sheepherder—required a lot more than the mere romantic desire of a young tyro. It necessitated certain aptitudes which came naturally to some and not to others—as much so as playing a violin or becoming a successful gambler. Russell had the physical qualifications and for a youngster, he had a lot of strength, stamina and guts. He loved to ride and took naturally to all the rough elements of life in the area. But when it came to roping and wrassling cantankerous cattle, he just didn't

come in to entertain the more elevated daytime buckaroos with a never ending repertoire of the sort of stories and pantomimes which they liked the best; and he would further amuse his buddies by drawing numerous caricatures of incidents in their daily activities. If Charlie Russell had been a more proficient cowboy, it is possible that he might never have developed the latent talents which eventually brought him the fame which he has today.

The steadfast determination to stick exclusively to the trade of cattle herding also had its fateful influence upon



THE ROUNDUP. 1913. This fine oil depicts the biggest event in the days of the open, unfenced range in which Russell participated personally and recorded so accurately with paint and brush. Mackay Collection, Historical Society of Montana.

his destiny. The short period of the cattle roundups not only gave Charlie a lot of in-between time to drift like a vagabond and absorb the colorful atmosphere and lore of the era; but also the low pay which he was able to collect caused him to turn to his art as the only supplementary means he knew of providing food and drink. His natural tendencies caused him to associate with those who knew the most about frontier life and lore and he was blessed with an ability to absorb this with a remarkably photographic memory. His drawing of pictures came naturally. He quickly learned that other folks liked his pictures and soon found that by putting a little more serious effort into them, they could be traded across a bar for drinks or at a store for groceries. It is probably unfair to say that this led to his ultimate career, although it certainly had a strong influence in that direction, and it is ironic that out of these rather odd circumstances grew the great inspiration to which "the cowboy artist" devoted the rest of his life.

Charlie Russell was entirely selftaught as an artist. In this respect he shares a marked similarity with two of our other foremost documentary artists of the Old West—George Catlin and Frederic Remington. None rose to lasting eminence under greater difficulties.

In his early days he carried his cheap and inadequate paints in an old (and dirty) sock or rolled in a piece of cloth tied to the saddle, which was about the only home he had. It was often a serious problem even to find pieces of paper or make-shift canvas on which to work. and it is reliably reported that he chewed the ends of wooden matches or twigs to make brushes. But his studio was the whole outdoors of Montana and. as he often said. Nature was his teacher. No one knew better the subjects he depicted and his greatest admirers were those who knew best the scenes he portraved.

Russell was so deeply devoted to the old-time orthodox cowboy life that he would have no part of the transition which was hemming in the great country with the damned barbed wire fences, nor the other aspects of the civilization which was being forced into the country by the coming of the railroads. As the old life was pushed further and further into oblivion, however. he devoted more and more time to his art, in which he re-lived and perpetuated that which was passing into the limbo of history. The market for his work rapidly increased and spread; although his character and temperament remained the same.



GET YOUR ROPES. 1899. Despite his modesty, Russell frequently portrayed himself. He is properly cast here as a night herder on horseback.

Probably the most influential single occurence in the life of Charlie Russell, was his marriage to Nancy Cooper -on September 9, 1896. If he had tried, he probably could not have entered into a union that seemed less certain to succeed for she was the antithesis of nearly everything which stamped his personality. She was pretty and sophisticated -and fourteen years younger than Charlie's mature thirty-four. Every conceivable hazard was stacked against this matrimonial gamble. The best that it seemed to offer was artistic poverty and shiftless insecurity. However, the deep devotion which existed between these two, and how "Mamie" struggled and succeeded in guiding Charlie Russell to stability and the heights of success, is a story classic in itself. She not only rode herd on him as no one else had ever done, but she also provided the business acumen which brought him financial independence in his endeavors as an artist.

When Russell died on October 24, 1926, at the age of sixty-two, he was internationally recognized as one of the foremost delineators of cowboy and Indian life. Under the skin he had never ceased to be a cowboy of the old school;

and he remained completely devoted to his adopted State of Montana. Not only did he retain the deep friendship of his old cronies of the round-up and Indian camps, but he numbered among his intimates many of the most notable personalities of the period.

It is now more than half-a-century since the paintings, sculpture, poems and published stories of the cowboy artist became popularly accepted by the broad standards which mark success for a man of arts and letters. That popularity has steadily increased through the years, and is still moving forward. Today, the work of no other American artist is more actively sought by a larger number of collectors, and they are willing to pay highly respectable prices. But there is a great deal more to it than just this. Charlie Russell has given to the world a most important contribution—realistic portravals of one of the most colorful eras in our history. So long as we retain any interest in the Old West, or any pride in our national background—and that pride is steadily increasing—the memory and acclaim of "Mr. Montana" will continue to endure and increase.



This undated but very early watercolor was entitled "The Deerslayers" by the youthful artist, but most students of Russell art now believe he was depicting himself as a tenderfoot with his first Montana friend and mentor, Jake Hoover. It was his meeting with this man, wise in the ways of the frontier, that C.M.R. describes in this article which originally appeared in "The Roundup," Great Falls High School Annual, 1916 issue. This fine watercolor is owned by Herbert Edgerton Rolfe of Butte, Montana, on loan to the Historical Society of Montana. All rights reserved by the owner. At the top of the next page is the moving "Death Song of Lone Wolf," in which an ancient battle between northern Plains Indians is recaptured by the artist after he had heard the story from his "blood brothers."

a Slice of My Early Life

by Charles M. Russell

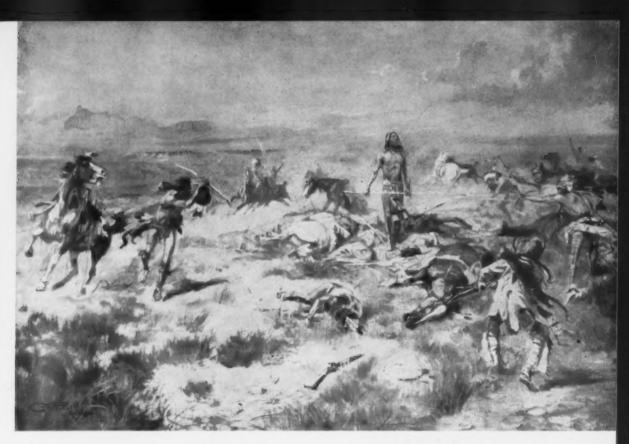
one of the artist's most rare and revealing autobiographical utterances

I WAS fifteen years old, a pilgrim, when I first met Jake Hoover, and a man never needed a friend worse than I did.

Jake was still a young man, but he had spent many years in the mountains; a hunter, trapper, prospector, and an all-around mountain man. I had come to Montana a few months before with a man much older than I was, and we did not get along well together. He did not understand a boy's nature and was not backward about telling me that I was no good. He finally told me that I could not live in Montana, but he didn't call the turn, for I'm here yet and still living.

One day I quit him and went to a man who had promised me a job herding horses, but when I reached the stage station, which was near the present town of Utica, I found that my supposed friend, the man whom I had just left, had beaten me out of the job by telling the station man that I wasn't worth my grub. The station man said that he did not want a kid of that sort around, so there was nothing for me to do but drift. All I owned in the world was a brown mare and a pinto pony. I rode the mare and used the pony to pack my bed, which was very light.

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With no money or grub, life did not seem joyful, and I felt mighty blue, but leaving the stage station I rode a short distance up the Judith River and made camp. While I was wondering where my next meal was coming from, a rider with several pack horses appeared and made his camp on the river near mine. I recognized him as Jake Hoover, whom I had seen several times. After getting his packs off he strolled over to my camp and looked it over.

As I remember him then, Jake Hoover was of medium height, with thick, curly brown hair which he wore quite long, a mustache and several months' growth of beard. His eyes, gray and deep-set, saw everything at a glance. He was seldom afoot, but when he walked, travelled with his toes out. He wore a light, soft hat, blue flannel shirt, duck pants and boots. His spurs were short-shanked, with broad heel bands. He never used a cartridge belt, but instead a plain leather strap on which he hung a knife scabbard holding two butcher knives. His cartridges were always carried in a pouch either in his

pocket or hanging under his belt. His gun was a .44 Winchester rifle which he packed across his saddle in front of him in a horn sling, but in a game country he carried it loose in his hands. His gun and cartridges were both kept slick with bear grease, and he could empty a Winchester faster than any other man I ever knew, never taking it from his shoulder once he started shooting.

After surveying my camp, Jake asked: "Where do you keep your grub? "I ain't got none," I answered.

Then I told him my troubles. He listened until I was through, and while I was talking I couldn't help feeling that he would be my friend.

"Well," he said, "if you want to, you can come with me, but trade that mare off as soon as you can." He explained that mares were a nuisance in the mountains because they would lead horses out of the country.

Jake was a skin hunter, but not wasteful, as he sold his meat to the few scattered ranchmen that lived along the Judith river. He had just got rid of a load of deer and elk meat, and was



This picture of Charlie Russell astride his favorite pinto, Monte, was taken in his early cowboy career in the Judith Basin country of Montana in the 1880's. He acquired Monte f r o m s o m e Indian friends, and that moving story is told by Russell himself beginning on Page 64 and entitled "Horse Hunters."

now returning to his mountain home on the South Fork of the Judith.

Early next morning we broke camp and started for the mountains.

The Judith Basin in those days was thinly settled. Where Lewistown stands today was Reed's Fort, a trading post owned by Bowles and Reed. Philbrook was then known as the Lower Crossing, and a man of the name of Bill Clegg ran a saloon there. Utica did not exist then, and the principal settlement on the Upper Judith was the mining camp of Yogo, which was then a year or two past its glory, but was still inhabited by a few miners and prospectors. Pig Eye Basin was then the home of Red Mike who ran a trading post; Ettien brothers, and Babcock and David. That was all the population. A man named Gaver also had a small ranch on the foothills near the river.

As we rode along I had a chance to size Jake up, and he told me something about himself. He rode a horse that he called by the beautiful name of "Guts," a heavy set bay with a stripe in his face, as good a mountain horse as ever traveled a trail. Morg, Sherman, and Buck were pack horses—all typical western cayuses.

That afternoon we entered the South Fork of the Judith. At that time there was no wagon road into it. A few trees felled across the lower canvon made Jake's fence. Shut off from the outside world it was a hunter's paradise, bounded by walls of mountains and containing miles of grassy open spaces, more green and beautiful than any man-made parks. These parks and the mountains behind them swarmed with deer, elk, mountain sheep and bear, besides beaver and other small fur-bearing animals. The creeks were alive with trout. Nature had surely done her best, and no king of the old times could have claimed a more beautiful and bountiful domain.

To me, a boy lately from the east, riding by Jake's side through a country like this seemed like a chapter from one of my favorite romances of the Rocky Mountains.

Jake's cabin was situated at the other end of the first big park, close to the creek. This cabin was the work of mountain men, made with an axe and an auger and not a nail in it. Instead, wooden pegs and pins were used. The roof and floor were of dirt, with a stone fireplace. There was, in reality, two cabins joined together by a shed, the second cabin being used as a hidehouse. There was but one window, composed of three panes of glass, set lengthwise in the logs. In the main cabin, besides the fireplace, was the bunk made of poles, filled with fir bows. There was also a rough table made of pine poles, hewed flat on the upper side. A stool or two of the same rough make about completed the furniture. To a man who loved the mountains nothing more was needed.

Since then I have been in the best hotels in Europe and America, but no food they produce could touch that that came from Jake's frying pan. The latter, with coffee pot and camp kettle in which beans and dried fruit were cooked, completed the kitchen equipment. He could make better bread in a frying pan than high price chefs can in a modern range.

As I have said, Jake was an allaround mountain man, and knew more of nature's secrets than any scientists that I have ever happened to meet. Although I never was a hunter myself, I had been with Jake on many hunts. He had no more fear of a bear than I would have of a milk cow. On one of our trips he killed four together, and the noise they made was not a peaceful song. I, myself, had a tree picked out and had spotted the limb I would sit on, but in the midst of the excitement, when one bear fell not more than twenty feet away from him, Jake looked about as startled as if he was grinding coffee.

Old timers who ought to know, claim Jake was the best hunter in Montana. He knew the ways and habits of all the wild creatures in the mountains. In those days I was a youngster with fairly keen sight, but Jake would see game where there was nothing visible to me, and he was always right about it. Sometimes I wouldn't see the animal until he had fired at it, and he seldom missed.

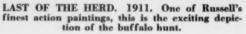
Jake was very fond of animals, and had many pet deer around his cabin. He used to put out salt to attract them,



THREE GENERATIONS. The accuracy and compassion with which Russell depicted his Indian friends is nowhere better shown than in this study of intimate family life. He lived among the Northern Blackfeet tribe, and was so accepted by them that it is said they urged him to take an Indian bride.



THE FIRST FURROW. 1907. The original of this watercolor, depicting the intrusion of the white man and his plow to the Indian domain, cannot be located.





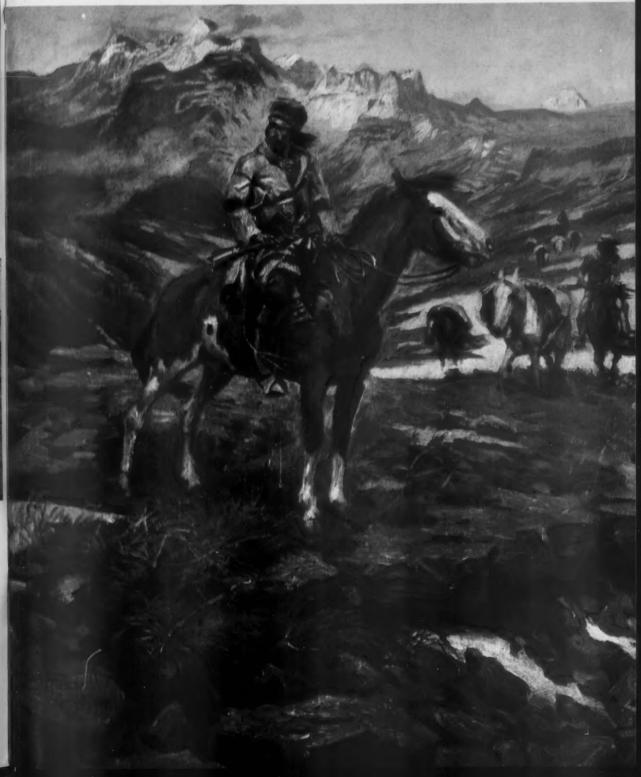
INDIAN CAMP No. 4. Another glimpse into the everyday life of the Indians, this is similar to others entitled "The Early American" and "The Robe Flesher."

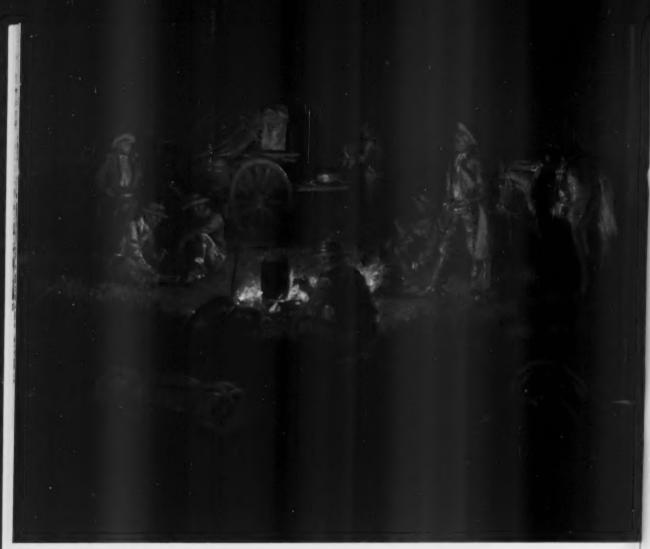
but I never knew him to kill a deer at a lick or near his home. He also had a colony of beaver above his cabin where he often went in the evenings to watch them work. He told me many hunting stories, and I remember one bear story, particularly. Jake said he was prospecting, and upon returning to his camp one evening he found that a Silver Tip had visited him and a pair of gum boots were missing. Jake decided that all that summer and fall he saw gum boot tracks in the mountains, and as there was no sign of camps or other humans, he said it must have been a bear wearing the boots.

A Full Color Portfolio of the Art of Pussell

from the famous collection at the Historical Society of Montana

Traders' And Trappers' Return





Laugh Kills Lonesome

MAN OF MIND

An old-time cowman discusses the intellect of C.M.R.

BY FRED BARTON

As an old friend of Charles M. Russell, I am attempting to record for the Historical Society of Montana some impressions about this remarkable man, before I die.

The story of Russell's life from birth to death has been well covered by his biographers. There is also a fairly complete record of his paintings, both oil and watercolor, as well as his pen and ink illustrations and his beautiful sculpture pieces. His books, poems and many

of his illustrated letters are a matter of record, too. And much has been written about the phenomenal general talent with which nature endowed him.

But little has been said or written about the mind of this remarkable man; and his mind was the real Charles M. Russell. I am in complete agreement with Will Rogers when he said that if Charlie had never painted a picture or done anything remarkable in a tangible way, he would still have been a truly great man.

Will Rogers knew Charlie Russell's magnificent mind. So did Lee Ford, Joe De Yong, Ben Roberts, myself and a few others. I am certain that all of us were better men because we came to know the real Charlie.

Always frank, honest and candid, Russell expressed his views, opinions and ideas clearly when in company of those he knew understood him. He either remained silent or confined himself to a few jocular remarks when in the company of city-raised folks who had no idea of the Frontier West he knew so well. Most eastern people were foreigners to Charlie and he had little in common with them, even after his fame was established.

One outstanding exception to this was that grand gentleman, Malcolm S. Mackay, Sr., of New York, who loved the Old West and thoroughly understood and admired Russell. [Editor's Note: The fine Mackay collection of Russell art is basic to the huge collection acquired by the Historical Society of Montana since 1952, enhancing it to the place where it is one of the world's finest both in quantity and quality.]

So much has been written about Russell, in some cases by research men who had never met him and by others who recognized his physical body and could identify him by name, but who never really knew him. There are men who say, "I have known Russell for many years." By this they mean that they had been introduced to Russell and that the acquaintance and friendship was of long duration and that they were familiar with certain characteristics of his, including his obvious sense of humor. Too few recognized his great mind.

Diplomacy was rare, indeed, in the old frontier west. Men usually expressed their views and opinions openly and strongly regardless of whether others agreed with them or not. In his early days in Montana Territory, Russell associated with them all. He conceded to all men the right to their opinion on any subject and he consistently refrained from argument. When he voiced

criticism of any man, which was rare, he was extremely generous, and usually it was expressed with his rare and gifted humor, which offended no man.

But Charlie did not accept any general opinion blindly, and every idea he heard had to bear his deepest investigation and analysis. In those early days on the frontier, for example, most men declared that "the only good Indian was a dead one." Charlie did not share this popular opinion—not when he arrived in 1880, nor did he ever share it thereafter. He studied, analyzed and lived with the Plains Indian and discovered at first hand that his "blood brother" had admirable qualities. He never changed this opinion.

The most useful gift the white man ever gave the Indian was the horse, and it altered his entire existence just as the motor car later changed the life of the white man. Since nature had not supplied horses as it did the buffalo, deer, antelope and elk, the Indian resorted to horse stealing as an adventuresome art. The Red Man considered this not a crime, but rather a real virtue and act of bravery.

Charlie Russell came to understand such Indian philosophy, probably better than any white man of his day. The Indian was a consummate part of the true old frontier which Charlie loved, and he was determined to know fully everything about every creature that was part of that frontier. His pictures and books attest to how well and accurately he succeeded in knowing and interpreting it.

Fred Barton was born at historic old Fort Keogh, adjoining one of the greatest of the old cow towns, Miles City, M.T., at a time when Miles was comparable to what Dodge City had been some years before. From his Military father he inherited a love for horses, which speedily translated itself for him into the life of a cowboy. Later, when Miles became the largest primary horse market in the world, Fred Barton was a horse-raiser and cowman; an authentic and an able one. Eventually he operated a fabulous venture—raising prairie horses for cavalry use for the Russian nobility on the steppes of Siberia. His adventures would fill many books. But to Fred Barton one of the greatest adventures of his life was the enduring friendship with Charles M. Russell. After C.M.R.'s death, he visited the invalided Nancy many times at Trail's End in Pasadena. He saw her last just shortly before her death, he is an inveterate collector of important Western Americana. Utilizing the talents of another able Montana artist, Boone, he built the largest collection of copies of Russell paintings in existence, which probably will soon be housed in the Cowboy Hall of Fame at Oklahoma City.



Indian Hunters' Return

To properly understand the development of Russell's mind, one must start with his youth in St. Louis. The Civil War, which left the south destitute and the north chaotic, was just over. It had been fought largely by mere boys of 16 to 20 years of age. Charlie must have talked with many of these young men, veterans of both armies. When these troops disbanded there was little opportunity for such boys, since the nation was not industrialized and the war had brought great disruption to what had been.

Another point: our pilgrim fathers, who claimed they had come to America largely to avoid religious persecution, had long established a code of blue laws which were terrible. These still

prevailed after the Civil War. One was required, after slaving all week for a pittance, to walk the streets with the facial expression of an undertaker. To laugh or smile on Sunday was forbidden, and children were not allowed to play on the Sabbath. A young woman who displayed one inch of her ankle was regarded as a fallen hussy, and a boy who smoked was considered hopeless and headed straight for the penitentiary. What a sad picture of life for one so abundantly alive as was young Charlie Russell! His entire being rebelled against such restraint. It is small wonder that he ran away from school to watch and listen to the stirring tales of the freeliving Mountain Men who not

(Continued on Page 77)

Ace Chronicler of the Old West

BY JAMES T. FORREST

C HARLES Marion Russell, artist, author, philosopher—so much of each that it is difficult for the student of Western lore to separate the artist from the man, the historian, the chronicler of a West which is now legend.

As an artist without formal art training, Russell has done more than any other man to illustrate the colorful characters from the pageant of the rugged frontier he knew and loved so well. He had the wisdom to paint of this dramathe people, places and events in it-only that which he thoroughly understood. He filled canvasses with hundreds of portraits of western characters, involved in exciting episodes of their daily "routine." Even his animals had individuality, especially the horses which he drew with such understanding care. The back-grounds for Russell's paintings were never stage setting backdrops but were sketched or painted in communion with the mountains, streams, plains he wished to portray. He refused to generalize even in this.

In the art work of Charles M. Russell one always finds an honest evaluation of a given situation; he did more than tell a story with the scenes he created. Thus he was an essayist, as well as an historian, with his brushes as well as pen. In many paintings Russell communicated a fine sense of humor, but often there is pathos in the portrayal. This is especially true in his treatment of the Indian, for the artist had a real sympathy for and understanding of the plight of the hunter who had been forced to farm—the untamed ones who were dying in captivity. Russell hunted



ROBBING THE EAGLE'S NEST, an unusual subject, now in the Hammer Galleries, N. Y. See p. 42.

and lived with the Indians of Montana and the border region of Canada during the 1880's and early 1890's when he was also a working cowboy. Russell never forgot the details of this part of his life nor did he lose his insight into the real character of the people he met and worked with.

He is famous for his wit; even the captions he gave his paintings contain humor. For instance, Russell painted a hunter looking at a mountain sheep which he had just shot. The sheep lies dead, but on an inaccessible ledge of a snow covered cliff. The hunter stands looking down, scratching his head. This painting he titled, "Meat's Not Meat 'Til It's in the Pan." Perhaps the most famous painting in the Gilcrease collection of Russells is the large "Camp Cook's Troubles" canvas. In this, a bucking bronc with his clinging rider has disturbed the morning camp scene, and eggs, bacon, frying pan, cowboys and cook are scattered in the melee. Russell had witnessed and experienced such a scene.



SIGNAL OF PEACE, is a large and unusual early oil (30 by 48 inches painted 1889) acquired by Victor Hammer when he first started to tour the famed Britzman collection throughout the nation. This painting, once owned by a Montana State Treasurer, James Rice, was greatly admired by Theodore Roosevelt, when he visited Montana in 1903.

Charles M. Russell's philosophy in many ways reminds us of the wise words of Will Rogers. His many illustrated letters contain evidence of a keen rustic philosophy. He wondered at modern progress and once remarked, "in spite of gasoline, the biggest part of the Rocky Mountains belongs to God." Charlie had little respect for the motor car; he asked that he be taken to "his last resting place by hosses." He was.

His letters were treasured by those who received them. One birthday greeting read, "A birthday is only a place on the trail of life where the traveler stops to look back." In a letter dated two years before his death, he wrote, "Old Dad Time trades little that men want he has traded me wrinkles for teeth, stiff legs for limber ones but cards, like yours, tell me he has left me my friends and for that great kindness I forgive him, Good Friends make the roughest trail easy." (Russell seldom used correct punctuation in his letters and often made strange conjunctions of words. These lines are exactly as he wrote them.)

Charles Marion Russell was born of well-to-do parents in St. Louis, Missouri in 1864, and he grew to be a typical boy, in that he preferred stolen moments hiking in the wood or fishing along a stream to the activity of

the classroom. However, young Russell had two well-defined preoccupations even as a school boy: he dreamed of going where he could become a cowboy, and he liked to draw and to model in wax. The interest in drawing prompted his parents to enter him in an art school, but Charlie soon tired of the formality of the classroom. He later told the story of how he had failed in his first assignment, to draw a human foot from a plaster cast. After three disappointing days the boy gave up and came home never to return to the school. When asked why he had left school he said, "Well, I just couldn't draw a foot to suit the teacher. Besides, I'll be painting cowboys when I get out West and they never take their boots off."

Just before his sixteenth birthday. Charlie's father finally gave in to the boy's urging and sent him to Montana under the guardianship of a sheepman with whom he soon parted. Russell

James T. Forrest is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, B.S. and M.S. degrees in American history, with some work on a PhD. He began his museum career at the Wisconsin State Historical Society as a research associate; has been an Air Force historian; curator of Museums for the State of Colorado and is now Director of the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art. He has written many articles on western subjects and is editor of a new history and art quarterly, The American Scene.

The charming set of watercolors, right and below, are not only brilliantly documentary, but they should have delightful appeal to all true sportsmen. The originals, with subtle coloration and minute detail—lost in the reproduction—capture the true spirit of hunting. This is HUNTING BUFFALO in the fine Hammer Gallery collection, New York.



found his home in the West. Here his natural ability to draw flourished, but most of all his power to observe and retain, gained expression. He arrived in Montana Territory just four years after the Custer battle and after the main resistance of the Indian had been crushed; but he was in time to see the red man still fighting to retain his way of life, even though his land was lost.

Russell was to remain in this part of the West which underwent rapid change in the final decades of the 19th Century. He took various jobs, but lived mostly as a cowhand in Central and Northern Montana—sketching and painting as he moved north with the great herds searching for unfenced land.

In 1896 Charlie married Nancy Cooper. Through her influence he progressed from cowboy, hunter, and town

loafer who painted and was called "Kid" and the "cowboy artist," to a man for whom painting was the only serious purpose in life. He called himself an "illustrator," but whatever he might be considered by the critics of his own day or any other, he was undeniably touched with a remarkable gift—the ability to record people and events with such warmth and understanding that no story, no history of the Old West is complete without his paintings to illustrate the epic scene.

Charles Russell has said of his own ability: "To have talent is no credit to its owner; what man can't help he should get neither credit nor blame for—it's not his fault . . . Any man that can make a living doing what he likes is lucky, and I'm that. Any time I cash in now, I win." An almost completed canvas was on his easel when he died in 1926 shortly after he wrote the above.

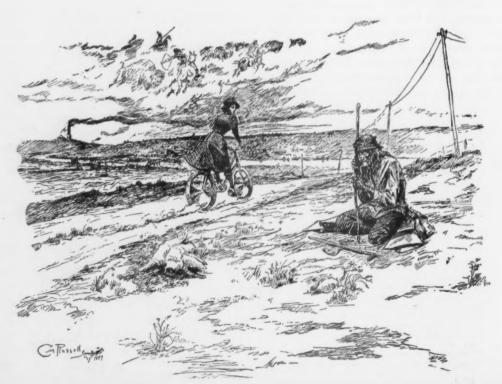
The Plains Indian, when dismounted and prior to his acquisition of the horse, used the protective guise of animal skins when moving near to his quarry, the humpbacked buffalo; and with the inquisitive antelope and object waving in the breeze inevitably brought the prong-horns close to the hunters. The title of course is HUNTING ANTELOPE. Hammer Galleries, New York. Both watercolors were done in 1898.





THE COMING OF THE SETTLERS. ARE THEY FRIENDS OR ENEMIES?

When C. M. Russell came to Montana Territory in 1880, he met in the Judith Basin some of the last of the noble, proud horseback Plains Indians. When he lived in Canada later among the Bloods they, too, were little changed by the white man's world. But within two decades—which brought barbed wire and trolley cars and the "terrors of civilization"—all bitterly resented and detested by C.M.R., his sensitive mind recoiled at such scenes as the one below, which he recorded on the outskirts of his home at Great Falls, Montana.



Montana, the magazine of western history



A Sidekick's Memories:

C. M. Russell As A Cowboy Friend

by CON PRICE

FIRST met Charlie Russell in the fall of the year 1888. He was night-herding beef cattle on the Judith Basin and Moccasin Range roundup. Charles was very modest and never claimed to be a great cowboy, but I noticed the bosses always gave him a very responsible job as the cowmen of those days were very particular how the beef cattle were handled.

We usually started the fall roundup about the first of September and the gathering and driving to the railroad sometimes took until the 15th of November. Now from the first day we worked the range, we cut out some steers fat enough for beef, and those cattle were under constant herd night and day, and the men were supposed to handle those cattle so they would gain in flesh while we were holding them-and any cowboy caught running or roping those steers was fired at once-and great care was taken to keep the cattle from stampeding. When we got all through we would have 2,000 or 2,500 head of cattle in the herd.

I remember a rather amusing story Charlie told me in years after we had quit working on the range. We were talking about people we liked and disliked. I said to Charlie, "I always thought you liked everybody." He laughed and said, "No. There was one roundup cook I have never forgiven for what he done to me." He said, "I was night herding cattle. One dark night the cattle were very nervous and kept trying to stampede. Just before

daylight my horse stepped in a badger hole and fell-right in a nice patch of cactus and prickly pears!" Charlie said he didn't miss any of those cactus. When he got up his body felt like a small cactus field. His partner caught his horse and staved with the cattle. and Charlie headed for camp. The cactus was distributed in his body so he couldn't sit on the saddle, so he walked and led his horse.

CON PRICE, a truly authentic cowboy, came to the end of his long trail in March, 1958. But to the last his mind retained keen memories of the Old West, and in the language of the cowpoke, he continued to delight those who came to visit. A close friend of Charles M. Russell, he left a legacy of memories of the days he and Russell loved the most in two splendid books, "Memories of Old Montana" and "Trails I Rode."

The accompanying piece is taken from "Memories of Old Montana," which appeared in 1945. Con Price was born in Iowa in 1869 and moved west to Deadwood, S. Dak., with his parents in 1879. He was a boy of sixteen when he got his first job as a cowhand, and he became one of the most expert in the business.





BRONC TO BREAKFAST. 1908. This camp scene, funny to nearly everyone except the cook, was dear to the heart of Con Price and all the waddies who rode the range with C. M. Russell. The artist painted himself on the right nearest the chuck wagon. Mackay Collection, Historical Society of Montana.

When he got to camp, the cook was starting breakfast. (I knew this old cook and he was plenty brave.) None of the cowboys were up yet. Charlie went in the cook tent where there was a lantern and took off his clothes to doctor himself and pull out some of those cactus. This old cook never spoke to anyone if he could help it, and as nobody had any right to come in that cook tent unless the cook called them to eat. Charlie was taking a privilege contrary to custom. Anyway the cook evidently did not notice him until he had all his clothes off and was disgracing his cook tent by undressing in it. He walked over to where Charlie was, said, "What the hell you think this is . . . a hospital?" He had a big butcher knife in his hand. He throwed Charlies' clothes outside and told Charlie to get the hell out of there too.

Charlie told me whenever he met a new acquaintance and he said he was a roundup cook by profession, he looked on him with some doubt as to his being human.

I was associated with Charlie for a good many years and I think I knew him as well as anybody could, and I think as a man and a friend he had very few equals. He was a fine Western artist, but Will Rogers said Charlie

would have been a great man if he couldn't have painted a fence post. I think that told the whole story.

Charlie enjoyed telling jokes on himself, which very few people do. He told me about one time the Captain of the Judith Basin Roundup sent another cowboy and himself to the Moccasin Roundup to rep (that was to gather any cattle that had drifted from their home range). The other man took a violin which he played a little. and Charlie took some paint and some brushes. The next year the boss of the Basin Range met the boss of the Moccasin Range and said, "What was the matter last year? I had a lot of cattle over on your range. I sent two men over there and didn't get hardly any cattle."

The other boss said, "What the Hell could you expect? You sent a fiddler and a painter over there to act as cowboys."

All during Charlie Russell's life as a cowboy he drew pictures for pastime—sometimes with a lead pencil and sometimes with a paint brush and even in his earliest and rough work, one could always recognize the man or horse that he had used for the picture. We used to wonder at those pictures but he (or us) never dreamed that he



Old Utica, a primitive early painting, probably done while Russell still worked the Old Judith Basin Pool.

was the making of the greatest Western artist of his day, which I believe has been conceded by art critics.

The last riding for wages that Charlie did was for the Bear Paw Pool at Chinook on Milk River. They were a combination of the Judith Basin Pool that he had worked for several years, but had moved their cattle across the Missouri River into the Bear Paw country. Charlie told me the reason he quit punching cows. The last winter he stayed in Chinook him and some other boys had a cabin that they wintered in and it was so cold they put on German socks and lined mittens to cook and eat breakfast, and nearly froze at that. I think it was in the year 1892 he bid good-bye to the range and saddled and packed his horses and headed for Great Falls to try his luck at painting. He told me he had tough going for quite awhile as he did not know the price to ask for a picture.

I have seen some of Charlie's pictures that he sold for ten dollars at that time, that afterwards he sold one to the Prince of Wales for ten thousand dollars that I couldn't see a great deal of difference. I think this money difference was due to his business manager—his wife, Nancy C. Russell, who certainly deserves great credit for making Charlie's name famous. She is in very poor health at this time (1939) and has suffered for a long time but she has great fighting heart and has never said "Whoa" in a bad place.

As a cowboy Charlie Russell was sure strong for cowboy decorations. As I look back on him now, I can see him, seldom with his shirt buttoned in the right button hole, and maybe dirty with part of one sleeve torn off, but his hat, boots, handkerchief and spurs and bridle were the heights of cowboy fashion. Of course those were the days when we didn't get to town



THE ROUNDUP, 1913. Also depicted in full format on page 10, this is one of the most classically beautiful of all Russell open range scenes, capturing the drama of the big event of those days, when all free-running cattle were rounded up and the calves branded.



This scene in which a Canadian Mountie enters a warrior camp is one of Russell's authentic and colorful stories on canvas. Painted in 1912, it is called "Single Handed" and is owned by Findlay Galleries, Chicago.

only two or three times a year, but when we did go to town we dressed like millionaires as long as our money lasted.

When Charlie quit riding and started painting for a living, some of his friends advised him to change his way of dress and get some city togs. That he would not do. He never liked suspenders or shoes and never wore them. He disliked fashion and said it was just an imitation of someone else. He always wore a good Stetson hat, a nice sash, and a good pair of boots—even after he had quit the range.

It reminds me of two city men I knew had come to a cow ranch on business and had an old-time cowboy taking them around. One day they were discussing the beauties of nature and when each one decided what he thought was the most beautiful thing he ever saw one of them asked the cowboy his idea of beauty. He promptly answered, "The prettiest thing I ever saw was a four year old fat steer," and he may have been right, as nature had given the steer everything it had to make it beautiful in its class, and he knew he was a steer and

was satisfied with his lot and didn't pretend to be anything but what he was.

That was the way I knew Charlie. He loved nature and the West and was Western from the soles of his feet to the top of his head and had the finest principle and the greatest philosophy I ever knew in anybody.

Charlie told me one of the worst troubles he had was some fellow would rush up to him and say, "Hello Charlie, I am sure glad to see you." Charlie would say, "I am glad to see you too," and to save his life he couldn't place him. He would talk to him about everything he could think of, hoping the fellow would say something that would refresh his memory but usually without any success, and he said he had to be very careful to not say "No" or "Yes" in the wrong place and give himself away.

I remember, when I went back to Montana from Cripple Creek, Colorado, in 1894, I came into town (Cascade, Montana—where Charlie was living) in a box car, but didn't tell Charlie how I arrived. In the few years I was away





These two delightful paintings, hung as companion pieces in the Historical Society of Montana gallery, show Russell's sense of humor as well as some obvious glee when the Indian outdoes the cowboy in playing the gambling game called "coon can." The first is entitled "Coon Can, a Horse Apiece" and the second "Coon Can, Two Horses." Undated, this pair is on loan to the Montana Society from Ruth M. Atkinson of Lewistown.

from Montana Charlie heard I had been killed by a horse. I didn't know anything about that report. So when I walked into his cabin we shook hands and had quite a talk—and, of course I thought he knew who I was. He was sitting by the stove frying bacon and I caught him looking at me in a sort of a puzzled way and I knew at once he didn't know who I was. So I said to him, "You don't know me." He said, "Yes, I do." "Well, who am I then?" He said, "If I didn't know Con Price was dead, I would say you was him."

While I was with Charlie that time, just in fun he had me pose for him in a stage hold-up. I had a sawed-off shot-gun, big hat and my pants legs inside my boots. We found an old Prince Albert coat somewhere that I wore and a big handkerchief around my neck. I surely looked tough. He sure got a kick out of that model.

Well, he painted that picture in a rough way and didn't give it much attention and never gave it any consideration as to value. It was more of a joke than anything else. I think about two years after he was married, he went to New York, and in some way this picture had got mixed up with the rest of his stuff, so it landed in New York with him.

He said New York was sure tough then for an artist breaking into the game. He said there was only two classes of people there: paupers and millionaires, and he had a hard time to keep out of the pauper class. But some artist friend loaned him the use of his studio and Charlie was trying to do a little work and took this old picture there.

One morning a foreign nobleman came in and was looking the studio over-mostly the other artist's workand he came to this old picture. After examining it for some time, he said, "How much is this picture worth?" Charlie said he needed money pretty bad just at that time and wanted to ask him one hundred and fifty dollars. but didn't know whether the old boy would go for that much or not. While he was hesitating Nancy, his wife, stepped over to where the old fellow was and said, "This one would be eight hundred dollars," and the man said. "Very well, I'll take it." Charlie said he nearly fell off his stool with joy.

After the fellow left he told Nancy, "I'll do the work from now on—you will do the selling," and I believe that bargain held good until the day of Charlie's death.

Charlie didn't like the new set-up. He was a child of the open West before wire fences and railroads spanned it. Civilization choked him even in the year 1889 when the Judith country was getting settled up with ranchers and sheep had taken the cattle range. He hated the change, and followed cattle north to the Milk River Country. He said "I expect I will have to ride the rest of my life but I would much rather be a poor cowboy than a



poor artist." He didn't know he was graduating from nature's school and the education frontier life had given him.

In the fall of 1891 he got a letter from a man in Great Falls who said if he could come there he could make seventy-five dollars a month painting, his grub included.

It looked good to Charlie, as he was only making forty a month riding, so he saddled the old gray and packed old Monty, the pinto and hit the trail for Great Falls.

When he arrived in Great Falls he was introduced to a guy who pulled cut a contract as long as a lariat for him to sign. Charlie wouldn't sign it until he had tried the proposition out. This fellow gave Charlie ten dollars on account, saying he would see him later.

After a few days he met Charlie and wanted to know why he hadn't started on the work. Charlie told him he had to find a place to live and get his supplies.

The contract read that everything Charlie painted or modeled for one year was to be the property of this man and





MEN OF THE OPEN RANGE, left, was painted in 1923 and is also called "Scattering the Riders." To most Montanans the setting is near Russell's beloved Cascade, on the Missouri River. Mackay Collection, Historical Society of Montana. Above is the action-packed "The Strenuous Life," done in 1901.

he wanted him to work from early morning until night. Charlie argued with him that there was some difference between painting and sawing wood and told him the deal was off.

He hunted up a fellow he knew and borrowed ten dollars and paid this fellow that had advanced the money to him. Charlie said he wouldn't work under pressure so they split up and Charlie started out for himself.

He put in with a bunch of cowboys (I was one of them), a round-up cook, and a broken-down prize fighter. We rented a shack on the south side of town. Our bill of fare was very short at times as Charlie was the only one that made any money and that was very little. We christened the shack and give it the name of Red Onion. We had some queer characters as guests. Broken gamblers, cowboys, horse thieves, cattle rustlers, in fact, everybody that hit town broke seemed to find the Red Onion to get something to eat. Among them all it was hard to get anyone to cook or wash the dishes but at meal time we always had a full house. Along about spring time I got a job in a cow outfit and I told Charlie. So he said if I was going away he had an announcement to make to the gang -and in effect it was that the Red Onion would be closed and go out of business.

TOLL COLLECTORS. 1913. The Indian leader is demanding a bounty of beef from the Trail Boss in exchange for allowing the herd of cattle to cross his rapidly diminishing buffalo range in this fine oil from the Mackay Collection. It is hung in the Historical Society of Montana gallery.



NO CHANCE TO ARBITRATE. 1915. This depiction of a miserable, wet morning in cowcamp conveys the artist's knowledge that the ornery cayuse was going to pitch the moment he is mounted. Mackay Collection, Historical Society of Montana. Russell casually painted some of his masterpieces on wood, bark, bone or hides. On the right is "On Day Herd," painted on the vault door of a bank in Lewistown, Montana. Renner Collection.

I believe it was the Spring of 1889 we met at Phillbrook in the Judith Basin for the Spring roundup and a lot of the boys were celebrating at the Post Office and store. The postmaster told us someone had sent him a piece of limburger cheese through the mail. He didn't know what to do with it as he didn't know anyone civilized enough to eat it, so he gave it to the cowboys who put in a lot of their time rubbing it on door knobs, the inside of hat bands and drinking cups. They had the whole town well perfumed. When someone noticed an old timer that had come to town to tank up on joy juice and had got so overloaded he went to sleep in the saloon, his heavy drooping moustache gave one of the boys an idea. A council was held and it was agreed that he should have his share of the limburger rubbed into his moustache under his nose. Being unconscious, old Bill slept like a baby in a cradle while the work was done.

Next day Charlie Russell saw him out back of the saloon, sitting on a box and looking very tough. He would put his hands over his mouth, breath into them, drop them and look at them and shake his head. Of course, Charlie knew what was the trouble as he had helped to fix him up the night before. Charlie went over to him and asked, "How are you stacking up today?" Old

Bill looked at him in a kind of a daze and shook his head. "Me? I'm not so good." Charlie asked, "What's the matter, are you sick?" "No-o-o not more than usual, I've felt as bad as this a thousand times. But—oh God—" then he covered his face again with his hands. After a few seconds he slowly lowered them, shaking his head and groaning, "Oh, it's something awful, I don't savvy."

Charlie very much in sympathy with him said, "What seems to be the matter, Bill?" "Damned if I know, but I've got the awfullest breath on me. 'Pears like I am plum spoiled inside. You can tell the boys my stay here on earth is damn short. Nobody could live long with the kind of breath I've got on me. Oh, oh!" Then he would breathe into his hands again saying, "Oh God!"

I believe he would have died if they hadn't told him what was the matter.

All the years I knew Charlie, I never knew him to go to church (although I know he was a real Christian at heart)



THE SURPRISE ATTACK, right, is a watercolor showing violent action as a group of cowpunchers are surprised by an Indian war party. Done early in the Russell career, it is dated 1898 and is in the Historical Society of Montana's Mackay Collection.



THE TRAIL BOSS. 1918. This fine oil shows a drive of Texas Longhorns, supervised by the trail boss. These were the days of the open range which men like Russell and Con Price never forgot.

but there was an old time preacher, a Methodist by name of Van Orsdel. He preached in cow camps, school houses or anywhere that he could get even a few people.

Brother Van told me when he graduated from the ministry he came up the Missouri River on a steam boat to Fort Benton. He had a very good voice. He said he sang hymns to pay his fare. That must have been in the early 1870's. When I knew him first, he used to ride horseback through the country and hold services, and he was sure loved by everybody. I listened to one of his sermons in the cow country and there was quite a sprinkling of cattle rustlers in that locality and I remember in his talk he told us if we would do as God wanted us to do we wouldn't need a fast horse and a long

He told us he overtook a bull whacker (a freighter) pulling a big hill out of Fort Benton one time. Brother Van was riding a horse and he followed along behind this fellow and the language he used for those cattle was sure strong. He said the fellow called each steer by some religious name with an oath after it, such as Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and so forth.

When the bull whacker got to the top of the hill, Brother Van asked him what was the idea of giving those cattle such religious names. The man

said, "It's appropriate. For instance, there is old Methodist—when I unyoke him he walks out a little distance and paws on the ground, gets down on his knees and balls and bellers just like a Methodist preacher. Then there is that old steer I call Baptist. If there's a water hole anywhere, he will find it and get into it and throw water all over himself—and old Bishop there, he leads all the other steers." He had a religious name appropriate for each steer. Brother Van got a kick of that.

Brother Van was a very devout Methodist and one time he and Charlie were discussing religion, Charlie said he didn't believe in so many branches of religion and said he thought the people should have a general roundup and make them all one. Brother Van said, "That's a fine idea, Charlie, and make it Methodist."

One time at Malta, Montana, when we were shipping cattle, a cowboy got killed. He was riding a young horse and the train came by and this horse got scared and run away with this boy. It ran into a wire fence and hit the wires just high enough on his legs to cause him to turn a somersault and land squarely on top of the boy and broke his neck. Brother Van preached a sermon over that boy's body. When I look back at it now, it seems to me the boy's body was laid out in an old store and I think there were about twenty

cowboys with their chaps and spurs on and the old time cowboy was a rather queer kind of mixture of human nature. Sometimes he drank whiskey to celebrate and have a good time; other times he drank when he was blue. I guess to try to raise his spirits. Anyway, this morning quite a number of them had taken on quite a load of the old joy juice. When the sermon started, Brother Van preached a very forceful sermon and the tears rolled down his old cheeks like rain drops and in looking around after that sermon was over there were very few dry faces among that tough old bunch of waddies and they were all as sober as if they never had a drink.

Speaking of batching, some people of this day may not know what it means. But for us cowboys it meant this: four or five of us would get together in the fall of the year and get a cabin in some little town, buy some groceries and go into winter quarters, and everybody cooked according to his liking and if anybody didn't like the way one fellow cooked he could cook to suit himself.

I remember one winter a bunch of us batched together and there was a great variety of tastes. One fellow loved maple syrup and lived mostly on that and a little bread . . . but mostly syrup. Another oldtimer wanted to put bacon in everything he cooked. He said it gave the cooking "tone" (he meant flavor). He spoiled most of his cooking for the rest of us. I believe if he would try to make a cake he would have put bacon in it. I liked hard boiled potatoes; nobody else did, so that was my specialty. Charlie Russell was the coffee and hot cake man. We all agreed he had no equal in those two things.

One time we had a Christmas dinner and in some way got a chicken (I don't want to remember how we got it) and we held council as to how it would be cooked and, of course, the oldtimer came forward at once with his bacon idea. But we told him the

chicken was old and tough and we would have to boil it. That didn't make any difference to him, as he said any way a chicken was cooked it had to have bacon in it to be good and to give it tone. Anyway he won out and the bacon was put in. Really, I think there was more bacon than chicken.

Charlie Russell volunteered to make some dumplings, which sounded good to everybody, but for some reason unknown to all of us, the dumplings turned to gravy and we had to eat them like soup with a spoon. Charlie himself didn't boast about those dumplings but his alibi was Bill's bacon ruined the whole mixture. I don't know as to the truth of that statement as I never knew Charlie to make dumplings again.

One time I was in Great Falls, Charlie was circulating a petition to get an oldtime cowboy out of the penitentiary. He had been sent up for rustling cattle and had served about four years. Charlie asked me to go with him on his rounds, and I did.

We called on people for several days and there was not a man or woman turned us down, until we met one of the wealthiest men in Great Falls. He read the petition and handed it back and said, "He can rot in the pen as far as I am concerned." Then he began to criticize Charlie for circulating the petition. There was where he made a mistake and the things he told him must have cut pretty deep into his feelings.

Charlie said, "If you don't want to sign the petition, that's your business, but don't you roast me. I knew this man. He was once my friend. I don't approve of what he done, but he has a wife and two children praying for his release and he has been punished enough already." Then he looked him in the eye and said, "You know, Jim, if we all got our just dues, there would be a big bunch of us in the pen with Bill." I thought I could see the old boy's whiskers tremble because he knew what Charlie meant.

I have never forgotten what Charlie said when we left this fellow. He said justice was the hardest, cruel word that ever was written. He said if all the people that were crying for real justice got it, they would think they were terribly abused and would not want it and would find out they wanted a little mercy instead.

While Charlie and I were partners, he got an attack of appendicitis and someone told him to stand on his head and walk on his hands and knees and it would cure him. He said he tried that cure until his head and knees were so sore he couldn't perform anymore.

So he finally made an appointment with the doctor for an operation.

The morning he went to the hospital his wife, Nancy, was with him. When they dressed him for the operating table (he called it putting a set of harness on him) Nancy was very much frightened and looked like she might break down under the strain. So to quiet her, he began to tell her how simple the operation was and that he didn't mind it at all and started to roll a cigarette, but his hands got to shaking so bad the tobacco all fell out of the paper and, of course, Nancy noticed that and it really made matters worse than if he had said nothing.

After he had gotten over the operation, he had some very severe pains. One day when the doctor came to see him Charlie asked him if he had lost any of his tools. When the doctor asked why he thought so, he said he was sure he had some of them sewed up inside of him.

There was an old doctor in Great Falls told Charlie and me a rather amusing experience he had about that time.

There was a fellow came through the country and camped in several places around Great Falls and one day he murdered a whole family and throwed them in the river. The officers finally arrested him and had him in jail awaiting trial. During that time he killed himself and he was buried in the paupers' graveyard.

This doctor told us he had a great curiosity to know what a human brain and head was like that would kill those people without any known motive. For some reason, Doc could not get the body and as he didn't like the idea of prowling around the graveyard at night, he chose one cold, rainy morning to go out and dig this fellow up. It took him quite awhile to get him out of the ground, and as he had just a small buggy to carry him in, he had to break the coffin open and put him in a gunny sack.

Doc said while he was working on the corpse the sun came out and the weather cleared and he thought everybody in Great Falls went for a ride or walk. There was people all around him and looking at him rather queer, and he was afraid he would be arrested for a grave robber, but he finally got to town without anybody seeing what he had.

Doc's entrance to his office was on Main Street, and no other way to get in. So he drove into an alley back of his place. There was a Jew running a pawn shop there facing onto a side street. So Doc took his sack with the corpse and went in the backway of the Jew's store and dropped it in his woodshed, and went into the front where the proprietor was standing behind his counter.

Doc slipped up to the counter and whispered, "Sol, I left a stiff in your shed back there. I will get him when it gets dark." He said the Jew's eyes began to grow large and said, "Vat's a stiff?" Doc said, "A dead man." The Jew began to scream and was attracting people on the street. He said, "My God, my God, take him out of here! I will be arrested for murder?" Doc whispered to him to hush, but he hollered still louder, so Doc picked up his

THE HERD QUITTER. 1897. This early Russell oil, presented to the Historical Society of Montana by Wallis Huidekoper, depicts three cowhands engaged in trying to rope and subdue a stubborn critter who refuses to stay with the herd. Russell and his friend Con Price were among the working cowboys of the open range whose job it was to keep these half-wild cattle in line.



sack, put it on his shoulder and walked up the main street into his office. He told us he was sure relieved when he got that corpse in his back room.

He had the skull on his desk when he told us the story and said whenever he looked at it, it reminded him of one of the most strenuous days of his life.

While I was working for the DHS outfit, I think it was in 1896, I got a letter from Charlie Russell telling me he was married. He said the gospel wrangler had caught him and necked him. The word "necking" didn't mean then what it does now. We would sometimes have a wild horse that we couldn't hold in the bunch and every chance he got he would run away and we would lose him. So it was the horse wrangler's job to catch this horse and with a short piece of rope tie him to a gentle horse, and the old horse would lead him wherever he went. He had to eat and sleep and go where the gentle horse went.

So Charlie said he was necked and didn't think he would get away for awhile, and gave me a pressing invitation to come and see him, and I wrote him the day I would be there and the train I would be on.

But something happened and I was a day late. Charlie met me at the train. After we had visited for a little while several other boys joined us and we were enjoying our general talk. Charlie turned to me and said, "What happened you didn't come yesterday?" He said, "When the train arrived I was at the depot and looked on the blind baggage car, on top of the train and down under the cars and the brake rods."

The conductor knew Charlie and said, "What are you looking for, Russ?" Charlie said, "I told him I had a letter from a friend of mine that he would be on this train and I come to meet him."

That was the first time I knew he knew I had got out of that box car several years before in Cascade.

I recall one time I was breaking horses close to the town of Cascade, Montana. I would ride a colt into town nearly every day.

A blacksmith and a barber got heckling each other about riding broncs. The blacksmith bet the barber four dollars he would ride the first horse that I rode to town. Charlie Russell was stake holder.

I didn't know anything about this bet until I had come to town and both parties tried to find out the merits of the horse—whether he would buck or not, and as I knew the stake money was going to be spent for drinks, I told each one a different story—the blacksmith he wouldn't buck, the barber he would, so as to be sure to have the bet go as the blacksmith was a little scared, but he was a big, powerful young man and the horse was rather small, he took a chance.

The bet was he had to ride the horse to the livery stable and back, which was about two blocks.

He got on. With a deathgrip, with the reins in one hand and the other on the saddle horn, he started and was getting along fine—going slow—when a stockman by name H. H. Nelson started by him going home. He had a big canvas overcoat on and could not resist the temptation to shake his coat



CHARLIE RUSSELL AND HIS FRIENDS. 1922. This nostalgic oil now in the Historical Society of Montana gallery, was painted as a Christmas gift for the artist's friend, Malcolm Mackay. In typically casual fashion, Russell called it a "poster" and rolled it up and mailed it to his friend. The rider in the foreground is of course Russell himself indicating with his hand the figures of his friends receding into the background of familiar Montana hills and buttes.

as he rode by the bronc—and down went the bronc's head. I think the first jump the saddle horn hit the smith in the eye, and the next jump he was on the ground. Somebody caught the horse and helped the blacksmith up.

He said, "That is all right. I have lost this bet, but I will make another one—I will whip Nelson the first time he comes to town."

We sure had a great time spending that eight dollars and I think every body else spent all they had besides.

We named that "A quiet day in Cascade," and Charlie drew a picture of it, with chickens and dogs and everything running in all directions and some old man with a cane trying to get out of the way.

I remember a very amusing incident on a roundup. We had been out on the range for about three months, and nobody had shaved. We came into a little town (a shipping point) and when we had got the cattle all loaded on the train, we found out there was a barber shop in town, so we all patronized it, but there was one stingy old fellow in the outfit that wouldn't spend a quarter to get shaved, so when we got started back on the range, he felt out of place, as we were all shaved and slicked up. He asked if there was anyone in the outfit that could shave him.

I told him I could. Now I had never shaved a man in my life, the cook had an old razor in the Mess box, and God knows when it had been sharpened. (We had no safety razors those days). I started in on him, of course his beard was full of sand and dust, and I used cold water and lye soap to make the lather. When I got to working on him. the blood followed the razor wherever I touched him. We didn't have any mirror so he couldn't see himself bleed. The boys would ask him occasionally how he was getting along, he said the razor pulled a little but Con was doing fine. Charlie was laying on his belly looking at the performance, and he laughed till the tears rolled down his cheeks. When I got through with him he looked like he had broken out with the smallpox. He picked scabs off his face for several days, he didn't complain, but he never asked me to shave him again. Nobody felt sorry for him because he never was known to buy a drink, and he had three thousand dollars in the bank, which was a big fortune to a cowboy



Montana, the magazine of western history



An Honest-to-God Human Being

by Will Rogers

AM AWFUL glad that Mrs. Russell is allowing the Publishers to put out a Book . . . It's sorter like putting a name on a Tombstone: if you didn't, nobody but the family would ever know who was buried there. If it wasn't for . . . Book[s] . . . Charlie Russell would just go down in history as an Artist, "The Great Cowboy Painter." We that knew him would all pass by his grave and know that there was more buried there than just a Painter. But the outside world wouldn't know it. They would be liable to figure him just "Another Artist."

But he wasn't just "Another Artist." He wasn't "just another" anything. In nothing that he ever did was he "just another." I always felt that all that Painting gag was just sort of a sideline with Charlie. I don't know that there is any grounds or foundation, but most of us come to think of an "Artist" of any line as a sort of half-breed Nut. We figure that if you took their "Art" away from 'em, they would be pretty naked. In other words, every time we meet one of 'em in any line of Art he might be dealing in, we want to either hear him play his fiddle, or sing us a song, or hand him his brush and tell him to start painting. But with old

Charlie, if he had quit talking to you and started painting, you would got sore. It wasn't what you wanted. What you wanted was to hear him talk, or read what he said. He could paint you a picture, and send you a letter with it, and you would value the letter more than you would the picture. Why, Charlie didn't have a single earmark on him that we associate with the "Artist," why he could think twice as straight as he could draw a line with a brush. He

This introduction to "Good Medicine" was written by Will Rogers, one of Charles M. Russell's close friends. "Good Medicine," a collection of the artist's letters to his friends, was published by his widow after his death and has become one of the most widely collected books on Russell.

from GOOD MEDICINE by Charles M. Russell. Copyright 1929, 1930 by Nancy C. Russell. Reprinted by permission of Doubleday & Co., Inc.

FALL 1958



The year in which Russell fashioned this figure of his friend Will Rogers on horseback is not known. Twenty bronze castings were made, and at the request of the Rogers family, one silver easting was made for Mrs. Rogers after the death of both men. From the estate of H. E. Britzman and now in the Trigg-Russell Memorial Gallery, Great Falls, at Helena and in other collections.

was a Philosopher. He was a great Humorist. He had a great underlying spiritual feeling, not the ordinary customs and habits that are supposed to mark, "What the well-dressed Christian is wearing this season," but a great sympathy and understanding for the man of the world, be he "Injun" or White. I don't know what religious outfit he sorter leaned to, if any of the present organized and chartered ones. But he sure had him one, and that was a belief in somebody or something, and that somebody or something was the one that he was going to leave to judge his fellow man—he didn't believe that he was called on to do it himself. He was Cowboy enough to know that the final roundup ain't on this range, and you are not "parted" and classified by any other humans. One steer don't cut out another one and decide what market he will be shipped to. That's done by a man, or somebody of an entirely different race from cattle. And that's the way Charlie figured us. No other human ain't going to tell us where we are headed for. He would have been a Great Teacher.—I wanted to say Preacher, but I wouldn't a called him that because they feel called on to advise and regulate, and Charlie didn't. He believed in

"Letting alone" and figuring it out for yourself, and when you got it figured out, it wasn't necessary to announce "how you had figured it out." He kinder figured that "reforming" comes from a conscience, and not from advice. His belief was peace and contentment, let everybody go their own way, live their own lives, so long, of course, as it didn't trespass the rights of others. He wanted to see an "Injun" let alone. He believed that he was as happy, and as great a contribution to mankind, on a Pony as he is in a Ford. He believed that an "Injun" living off the wild game of the Plains. and the fishes of the streams, and taking nothing from his fellow man, demanding no changes, might, if his example was followed, lead to a life of peace and contentment as beneficial as if you followed in the footsteps of a Wall Street broker. He had lived and associated with the Indians, and he knew that if you talked with a wise old Indian you would receive more real philosophy and knowledge than you could attending 32 Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, and Kiwanis Luncheons. He didn't believe that everthing New was necessarily "Progress." He didn't think because we are going in Debt, that we are going ahead. He didn't think a "paved" street made a better Town. He knew that it only made a more comfortable town for an Automobilist to ride in. I doubt if he thought a round or two of Cocktails served to your Guests in your own home was any great improvement over going into the Silver Dollar and having a couple and not breaking any law.

He loved Nature, — everything he painted God had made. He didn't monkey away much time with the things that Man had made. He would rather paint a naked Indian than a fully clothed white man.

In people, he loved Human Nature. In stories, he loved Human interest. He ought to have been a Doctor. He wouldn't have had to use an X-ray. He studied you from the inside out. Your outside never interested him. You never saw one of his paintings that you couldn't tell just what the Indian, the Horse and Buffalo were thinking about.

If he had devoted the same time to writing that he had to his brush, he would have left a tremendous impression in that line. It's cropping out in every letter, in every line, his original observations, original ways of expressing them. He was a great story-teller. Bret Hart. Mark Twain or any of our old traditions couldn't paint a word picture with the originality that Charlie could. He could take a short little yarn and make a production out of it. What a public entertainer he would have made. So few writers can tell their stuff. You are going to get a lot of it in [his] letters. Read between the lines. Don't just glance over the bare words. It's like his Pictures. He never painted a Picture that you couldn't look closely and find some little concealed humor in it. And that's the way with these,every line has something more than appears on the bare paper.

It's hard for any man to tell what we did lose when we lost this fellow. No man, in my little experience, ever combined as many really unusual traits, and all based on One—Just Human. No conceit—You won't find a line or a spoken word ever uttered by him that would lead you to believe he had ever done anything that was the least bit out of the ordinary. You won't find a line of malice, hatred or envy . . . He had it in for Nobody.

I think every one of us that had the pleasure of knowing him is just a little better by having done so, and I hope everybody that reads some of his thoughts here will get a little aid in life's journey by seeing how it's possible to go through life living and let live. He not only left us great living Pictures of what our West was, but he left us an example of how to live in friendship with all mankind. A Real Downright, Honest to God, Human Being.

—Will Rogers

IN THE WHITE MAN'S WORLD, reproduced below, is a study of a Cree Indian named Young Boy, reduced to selling mounted buffalo horn hatracks to make his way in the white man's world.





CM Pussell

As seen through the eyes of an eminent art dealer and critic . . . Plus an insight into the famed Britzman-Hammer collection

By Victor J. Hammer

THE Hammer Galleries of New York are proud, indeed, to share with Montana, the West and all America an enthusiasm and love for Charles M. Russell. This gallery now houses one of the largest and most important collections of the works of this able Western American artist outside a museum.

Familiarly known as the Britzman Collection, the Hammer Brothers' collection is made up, mainly, of 105 original works of Russell acquired in 1957, in California, from the widow of Homer E. Britzman.

At the time of Russell's death on October 24, 1926 in Great Falls, the artist and his wife, Nancy, were in the process of building a home in Pasadena, Calif., to be called "Trails End." It was their dream that this home serve not only as a place of residence but as a studio and gallery for Charlie's works.

Russell did not live to see the home finished, but his widow lived there in quiet retirement, surrounded by many of his important paintings, drawings, bronzes and priceless uncast wax figures, until her death on May 23, 1940.

This significent treasure of art was acquired after her death by Homer E. Britzman and a few friends and associates and remained housed in "Trails End." Through the years it was added to from time to time by Mr. Britzman and eventually became an outstanding private collection.

When acquired from Mr. Britzman's widow by the Hammer brothers, Armand, Harry and Victor, this great, once-private collection was exhibited

publicly last year in museums at Los Angeles, San Francisco, Helena and Great Falls, Montana; Calgary, Fort Worth, and finally, for two months, at the New York Historical Society in New York City.

Everywhere the collection was enthusiastically received. Thousands of persons saw, for the first time, the vital works of this incomparable artist. It was most gratifying to the exhibitors, too, to meet and talk with so many old timers and the descendants of Pioneers, who had actually known Russell and

The famed Hammer Galleries in New York City was organized more than 30 years ago by the Hammer brothers, Armand, Harry and Victor. They have since handled some of the most prominent art collections in this country, including that of the fabulous William Randolph Hearst, which was eventually sold through Gimbel Brothers.

The Hammers are men of many interests, including the mining of asbestos and jade, the manufacture of pencils, pens, pharmaceutical and distilled products, oil drilling, and finally the operation of the Mutual Broadcasting System, of which Dr. Armand Hammer is president and board chairman.

Dr. Hammer headed the group that raised 100 million pounds of grain for Europe's starving peoples for UNNRA, and served on the Advisory Board of the Institute of Peace sponsored by Dwight Eisenhower when he headed Columbia University. Victor, the author of this plece, is most intimately connected with the famous gallery in New York and is widely known and respected in the field of art.



to hear from them some of the endearing, humorous and delightful incidents and anecdotes about him.

Many of those familiar with Russell's beloved West recognized the specific characters he depicted, the exact locations, and even some of the horses in his pictures. All of this attests to the great accuracy with which Russell painted, making him not only a fine artist but an able graphic historian as well.

For example, in this large collection, there is the dramatic unfinished picture "Trail's End" on which Russell was working at the time of his last illness. "His Heart Sleeps," one of the finest small paintings ever to come from his palette, was given by him to his wife accompanied by the beautiful poem with which Harold McCracken ended his outstanding biography of Russell, published last year, "The Charles M. Russell Book." This lovely little oil had hung over Nancy Russell's bed at her home in Pasadena.

Also included in the collection are two Marine scenes, "The Burning of the Tonquin" and "Sailing Ship." This rare subject matter (for Russell) causes one to conjecture that if Charles Russell had had the urge to be a sailor rather than a cowboy he could have become as famous for painting the sea as he did for painting the West.

Other outstanding works included in the Britzman group are the powerful "Where Great Herds Come to Drink," and one of his finest self portraits in which he is garbed, as always, in his favorite red sash. There is also the brilliant and exciting "Navajo Wild Horse Hunters" with its background of the Southwest; "Rider of the Rough String," an early version of one of Russell's most famous paintings, "Bronc to Breakfast," and "I Drink Not to Kings," a series of three water colors accompanied by a poem, which shows yet another side of his complex character, inspired by Russell's visit to England.

"At the End of a Rope" is typical of the action-packed drama which Russell so ably painted, and the impending drama of "In the Enemy Country" is also typical of him, showing as it does as much of portent as of actual event. The extremely rare "Dream of Burlington," said to be one of the very earliest works of Russell, is included in the collection.

Ramon Adams and Homer E. Britzman drew from this collection most of the illustrations used in their book of biography, "C. M. Russell, the Cowboy Artist."

Because a major part of the material in the Hammer Brothers' collection was so intimately associated with the lives



NO KETCHUM. This watercolor, full of action and made more interesting because of Russell's own meaningful title, was recently acquired by the Hammer Galleries of New York.

of Charlie and Nancy Russell, the Hammer Galleries felt it should be kept intact, rather than sold piecemeal.

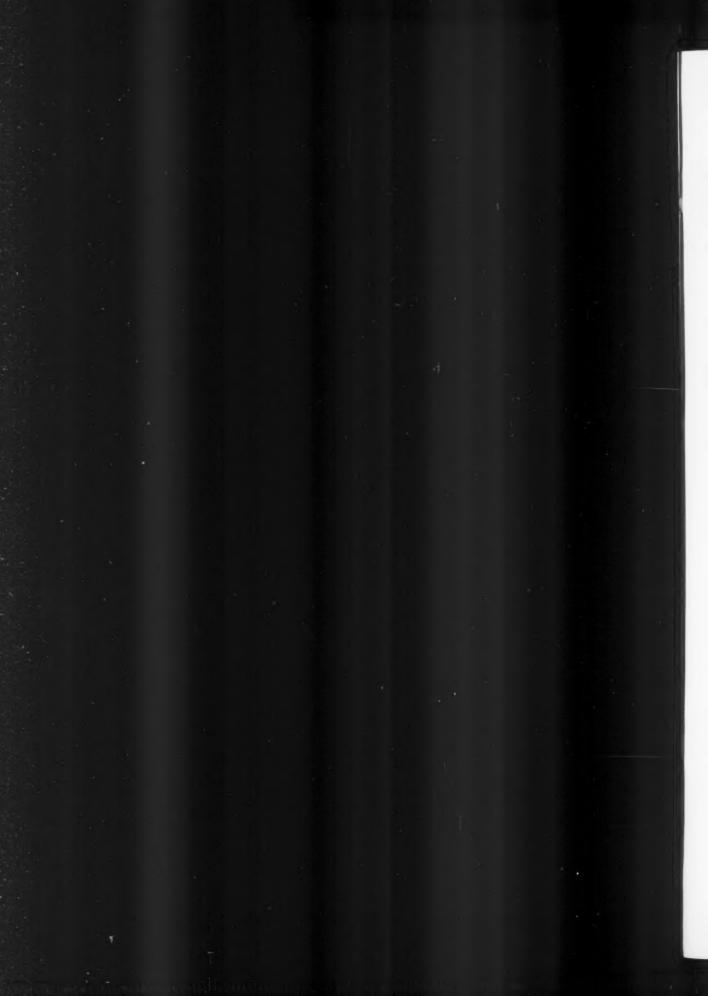
In addition to the Britzman collection, the Hammer Galleries have since been able to acquire a number of works of C. M. Russell from various owners. Among these are "Signal of Peace," acquired from James H. Rice, once State Treasurer of Montana, and according to his son, admired by Theodore Roosevelt when he visited the state in 1903; "Robbing the Eagle's Nest," an unusual and almost unique subject for Russell; and

a pair of superb watercolors, "Hunting Buffalo" and "Hunting Antelope," of great interest to sportsmen and nature lovers.

The Hammer Galleries hope that this last important private collection of Russelliana will eventually find a home in one of America's museums. It will probably be impossible, ever again, to assemble such a massive group of original works, embracing as it does all periods and phases of the life of this incomparable artist, humorist, historian and philosopher, Charles M. Russell.

A REAL BOMB WAS BURST IN THE ART WORLD—PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELD OF WESTERN AMERICANA—WHEN THE HAMMER BROTHERS ACQUIRED THE LONG-COVETED BRITZMAN COLLECTION IN 1957. WE ARE PRIVILEGED, INDEED, IN THE TWELVE PAGES WHICH FOLLOW, TO PRESENT IN FULL COLOR, TWENTYTWO OF THE IMPORTANT PAINTINGS WHICH THE HAMMERS ACQUIRED WHEN THEY PURCHASED THE GREAT BRITZMAN COLLECTION OF CHARLES M. RUSSELL ART.







RETURN OF THE WARRIORS Water color 11½ x 16 inches. Signed and dated 1906, lower left.

THE ROBE FLESHER, or CAMP OF THE RED MAN Water color, 165% x 213% inches (face). Signed lower left.





NAVAJO WILD HORSE HUNTERS

Water color, 13% x 18½ inches (face). Signed and dated 1919, lower left. Presented by Russell and inscribed to: "Thomas N. Jamieson III on his first birthday, March 28, 1922."

TRAIL'S END

Oil on canvas, 14% x 20% inches. Painted 1926, unsigned. Last painting by Russell.





WAITING FOR A CHINOOK,

or LAST OF 5000
Water color, 19½ x 28½ inches (face).
Signed lower left. Only recreation by Russell of early small sketch which brought him national recognition, painted for his friend T. P. Browne, of Butte, Montana.

SOLITUDE

Water color, 7% x 12% inches (face). Signed with monogram, lower right.





HIS HEART SLEEPS

Oil on carton, 7 x 11% inches.
Signed and dated 1911, lower left.
Presented with the poem by Russell to his wife Nancy on her birthday.

DUDES

Water color 7 x 9 inches (face). Signed and dated 1915, lower right.





MOURNING HER

WARRIOR DEAD
Water color, 10 x 12% inches (face).
Signed and dated 1899, lower left.

MEDICINE MAN
Water color, 7 x 9¼ inches (face).
Signed with monogram, lower left.





WHERE GREAT HERDS COME TO DRINK Oil on canvas, 29¾ x 35¾ inches. Signed and dated 1901, lower left.





IN THE ENEMY COUNTRY

Water color, 141/4 x 191/8 inches (face). Signed and dated 1899, lower left.

WHEN ARROWS

SPELLED DEATH
Water color, 14 x 20 inches (face).
Signed and dated 1902, lower left.









NOBLEMAN OF THE PLAINS Water color, 14% x 10% inches (face). Signed and dated 1899, lower left.



SELF-PORTRAIT
Water color, 121/4 inches x 61/4 inches (face).
Signed and dated 1900, lower left.



RIDER OF THE ROUGH STRING Oil on canvas, 14 x 24 inches. Signed and dated 1890, lower left.

AT THE END OF THE ROPE Water color, 125% x 185% inches (face). Signed and dated 1919, lower left.

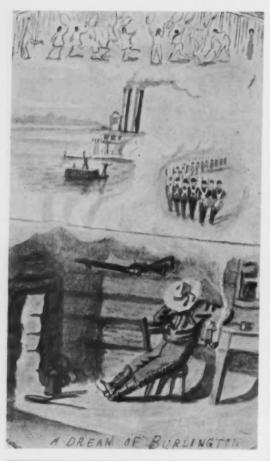




I DRINK NOT TO KINGS water colors 85% x 11½ inches. Signed and dated 1920.

UNSCHEDULED STOP Water color, 7¾ x 11½ inches (face). Signed and dated 1926, lower left.





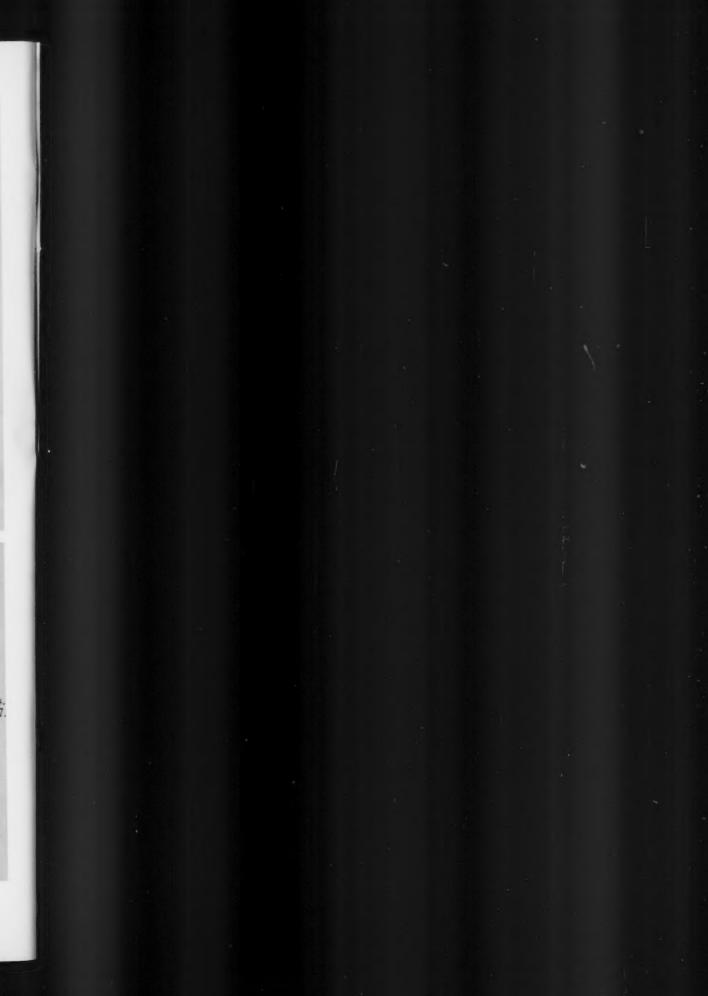
DREAM OF BURLINGTON Water color, 5¼ x 3 inches. Painted 1880, unsigned. Russell's earliest known work.

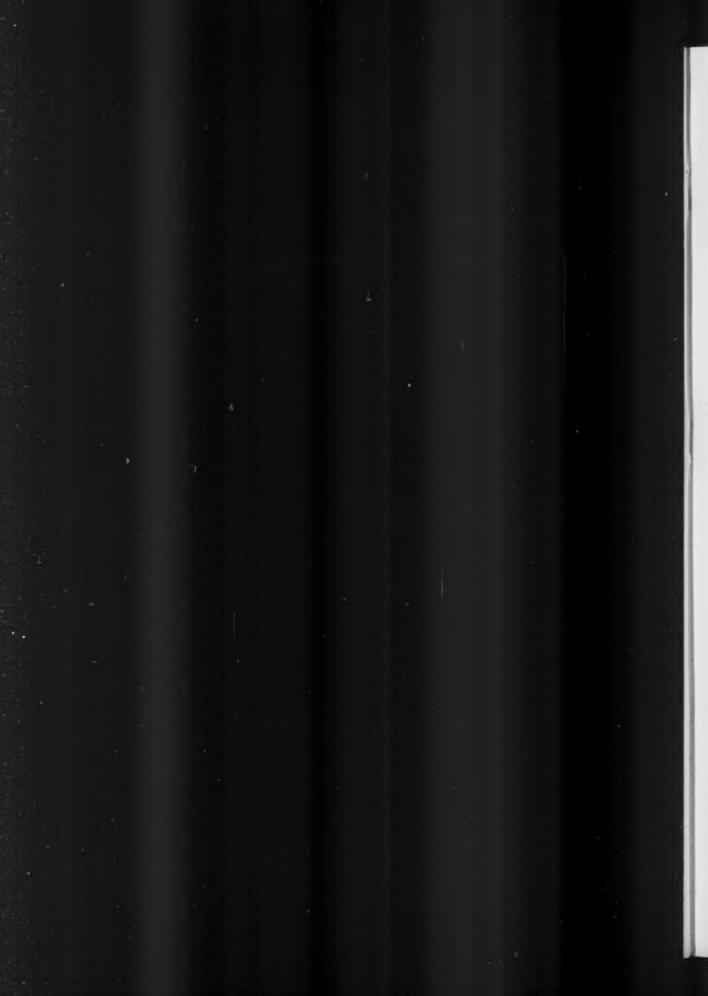


HAPPY NEW YEAR
Water color, 3 x 5% inches.
Signed with monogram and dated 1916.
Illustrated postcard by Russell.



RED BIRD, or Letter to Colonel Dickinson Water color, 10½ x 7¾ inches. Signed and dated July 12, 1917.







A Letter to Brother Van

in which the artist reveals some of his complex personal philosophy and a deep, if not obvious, sense of religion . . .

PERHAPS the trails around which memories of Charles M. Russell still cling were never better illustrated than in a letter he wrote to the late Rev. W. W. Van Orsdel, pioneer Montana preacher, who began his ministrations to the spiritual of the then few settlers in the territory at about the time Russell first came to the state as a boy.

The letter was written on March 20, 1918 when a formal celebration of "Brother Van's" birthday anniversary was held at Fort Benton. It was just 46 years after Brother Van first came to the famous old river town. Many notables were there and those who could not be present sent letters to the aged minister.

Russell's letter was a characteristic one, in which he told of his first meeting with "Brother Van" and the circumstances which indelibly impressed the occasion on his memory. A beautiful sketch in water colors accompanied the artist's regrets. The sketch represented a herd of buffalo fording a river, while a steamer waited in mid-stream as the animals used the right of way. The artist, who at that time was detained in Great Falls on jury duty wrote thus to the minister:

"I think it was about this time of the year, 37 years ago, that we first met at Babcock's ranch in the Pigeye basin of the Upper Judith. I was living at that time with a hunter and trapper, Jake Hoover, whom you will remember. He and I had come down from the South Fort with three pack horses, loaded with deer and elk meat, which we sold to the ranchers, and we had stopped for the night with Old Bab, a man as rough as the mountains which he loved, but who was all heart from the belt up, and friends and strangers were welcome to shove their feet under his table.

"This all-welcome way of his made the camp a hang out for many homeless mountain and prairie men, and his log walls and dirt roof seemed like a palace to those who lived mostly under the sky.

"The evening you came there was a mixture of bullwhackers, hunters and prospectors who welcomed you with handshakes and rough but friendly greetings. I was the only stranger to you. So after Bab introduced Kid Russell, he took me to one side and whispered, 'Boy,' says he 'I don't savy many psalm singers, but Brother Van deals square,' and when we all sat down to our elk meat, beans, coffee and dried apples, under the rays of a bacon grease light, these men who knew little law, and one of them I knew wore notches on his gun, men who had not prayed since they knelt at their mother's knees, bowed their heads while you, Brother Van, gave thanks, and when you finished, some one said, 'Amen.'



"I am not sure, but I think it was the man who I heard later was or had been a road agent. I was 16 vears old then, Brother Van, but have never forgotten vour stay at Old Bab's with men whose talk was generally emphasized with fancy profanity; but while you were with us, although they had to talk slow and careful, there was never a slip. The outlaw at Bab's was a sinner and none of us were saints, but our hearts were clean at least, while you gave thanks, and the hold-up said 'Amen.' You brought to the minds of these hardened, homeless men the faces of their mothers: a man cannot be bad while she is near.

"I have met you many times since that, Brother Van—sometimes in lonely places, but you never were lonesome or alone, for a man with scarred hands and feet stood beside you and near Him there is no hate, so all you met loved you.



"'Be good and you will be happy' is an old saying, which many contradict and say goodness is a rough trail over dangerous passes with windfalls, and swift, deep rivers to cross. I have never ridden it very far myself, but judging from the looks of you it's a cinch bet that with a hoss called 'Faith' under you it's a smoother flower-grown trail with easy fords, where birds sing and cold, clear streams dance in the sunlight all the way to the pass that crosses the big divide.

"Brother Van, you have ridden that trail a long time and I hope you will ride to many birthdays on this side of the big range.

"With best wishes from my best half and me,

"Your friend,
"C. M. Russell."





Montana, the magazine of western history



The Conservatism of Charles M. Russell

by J. Frank Dobie

NE CANNOT imagine Charles M. Russell living in a world without horses. If the wheel had never been devised, he could have lived content. The steamboat had carried traders and trappers up the Missouri River and become a feature in the pageant of the West before he was born; he accepted the steamboat, respected it. When in 1880, at the age of sixteen, he went to Montana, he traveled by the railway to its end and then took the stage. The Far West was at that time still an unfenced and comparatively unoccupied expanse of grass and mountains; he accepted and respected the steam engine as one of its features. As it hauled in plows, barbed wire and people, people, people, he would, had he had the power, have Joshuaed the sun to a permanent standstill.

The Russell genius was averse to change. No single collection of his great art could be regarded as a full document on the evolution of transportation in the West; although in his fertile life span he came close to this. Such a series would include the old Red River cart drawn with such casual care in his Pen Sketches (about 1899). Other able drawings and paintings, except that of the Pony Express, focus upon conveyances, progressing from dog travois to railroad train, that stress incident and effect upon human beings rather than the transports themselves.

Including the transports, Russell did document the Old West. Plains Indian or frontiersman dominates countless paintings. Russell never generalized. In any Russell picture of horses, for example, a particular horse at a particular time responds in a particular way to a particular stimulus; in the same way,



J. FRANK DOBIE, one of America's most articulate historians whose scholarly piece on Charles M. Russell is reprinted here, is pictured on the occasion of his last visit to the Historical Society of Montana. He is shown inspecting "The Herd Quitter," an 1897 oil given to the Society in 1953 by Wallis Huidekoper. Born in Texas in 1888, this distinguished man is the author of numerous books on the West, all of them scholarly, informative and readable. Reproduced at the top of this page is the largest and probably the finest oil ever painted by Charles M. Russell. Painted in 1912, it measures 25 by 12 feet and covers the entire back wall of the House of Representatives Chamber in Montan's capitol. Entitled "Lewis and Clark Meeting the Flatheads," its setting is Ross Hole at the head of the Blitterroot River in southwestern Montana and the occasion is when the weary men of the Lewis and Clark Expedition met a band of 400 hospitable Flathead Indians who provided them and their animals with food and water.



This is one of the earliest treatments of a favorite Russell subject, done several times. Called SQUAW TRAVOIS, this lovely watercolor was done in 1895. A similar one is in the Historical Society of Montana, presented as a memorial to Maude and Florence Fortune in 1953.

his man made objects are viewed under particular circumstances. Here the steamboat and railway train are interesting through the eyes of the Indians whom they are dooming, very much as in one of Russell's paintings a wagon, unseen, is interesting for the alarm that sight of its tracks over prairie grass gives a band of scouting warriors. He was positively not interested in anything bearing mechanical evolution.

C. M. Russell's passionate sympathy for the primitive West welled into antipathy for the forces relegating it-and for him automobiles and tractors expressed those forces. He never glimpsed. much less accepted, "the one increasing purpose" in evolutionary processes that enables the contemporary Texas artist. Tom Lea for example, to comprehend with equanimity and equal sympathy the conquistador riding the first horse upon an isolated continent and the airplane that, more than four hundred years afterwards, bridges continents. Each a distinct man and a distinct artist. Tom Lea is at home in a cosmopolitan world of change, whereas Charlie Russell was at home only in a West that had ceased to exist by the time he arrived at artistic maturity. Tom Lea grapples intellectually with his world, is a thinker: Charlie Russell evaluated life out of instinctive predilections. Vitality, that "one thing needful" to all creative work, shows constantly in the work of both.

Russell's opposition to change was but the obverse of his concentration upon the old. His art can be comprehended only through an understanding of his conservatism. It was not the conservatism of the privileged who resent change because change will take away their privileges. It was the conservatism of love and loyalty.

Before he died in 1926, the airplane was changing the world; he dismissed it as a "flying machine." He was fond of skunks, a family of which he protected at his lodge on Lake McDonald, but his name for the automobile was "skunk wagon." His satisfaction in a cartoon he made showing mounted Indians passing a broken-down skunk wagon is manifest. His forward-looking wife Nancy-to whom Russell's career as a serious artist was largely owingwould say to him, "Charlie, why don't you take an interest in something besides the past?" "She lives for tomorrow and I live for yesterday," he said. For a long time he refused to ride in an automobile; he never did put a hand on a steering wheel. "You can have a car." he often said to Nancy, "but I'll stick to my hoss; we understan' each other better." At the World's Fair, in 1903, at St. Louis, the place of his birth and boyhood, he passed by the exhibitions of Twentieth Century progress and found kinship with a caged coyote "who licked my hand like he knew me. I guess I brought the smell of plains with me."

"Invention," he wrote to a friend, "has made it easy for mankind but it has made him no better. Machinery has no branes." He resented the advent of the electric lights as deeply, but not so

This i m p o r t a n t oil painting, one of Russell's m o s t beautiful, was done in 1900 and is called INDIAN HUNT-ER'S RETURN. It depicts the pleasure and gratitude when freshly-killed buffalo comes into the mid-winter camp of the Plains Indians. From the Mackay Collection, Historical Society of Montana.



quietly, as Queen Victoria. He once called the automatic rifle a "God-damned diarrhoea gun"—and I wonder how he would have spelled it. The old-time sixshooter and Winchester rifle were good enough for him. In the physical world he was a fundamentalist. It began going to hell for him about 1889, the year that Montana Territory became a state with ambitions to develop. One time Nancy got him to make a speech at a kind of booster gathering. The toastmaster introduced him as a pioneer.

Charlie began: "I have been called a pioneer. In my book a pioneer is a man who comes to a virgin country, traps off all the fur, kills off all the wild meat, cuts down all the trees, grazes off all the grass, plows the roots up, and strings ten million miles of bob wire. A pioneer destroys things and calls it civilization. I wish to God that this country was just like it was when I first saw it and that none of you folks were here at all."

About this time he realized that he had insulted his audience. He grabbed his hat and, in the boots and desperado sash that he always wore, left the room.

A string of verses that he wrote to Robert Vaughn concludes:

"Here's to hell with the booster, The land is no longer free, The worst old timer I ever knew Looks dam good to me."

Russell's devotion to old times, old ways, the Old West did not come from age. It was congenital. Even in infancy he pictured the West of Indians, spaces and outlanders and knew that he wanted it. Only when he got there did he begin to live. When he was forty-three years old, he looked at the "sayling car lines" (elevated) of New York and set down as a principle of life that the "two miles of railroad track and a fiew hacks" back in Great Falls were "swift enouf" for him. From Chicago in 1916 he wrote his friend and neighbor A. J. Trigg:

"It's about thirty-two years since I first saw this burg. I was armed with a punch pole, a stock car under me loaded with grass eaters. I came from the big out doores and the light, smoke and smell made me lonsum. The hole world has changed since then I have not. I'm no more at home in a big city than I was then an I'm still lonsum."

He wanted room; he wanted to be left alone; he believed in other people being left alone. His latest request was that his body be carried to the grave behind horses and not by a machine, and that is the way it was carried.





THE BUFFALO HUNT. 1915. This is another of Russell's really great and accurate oil paintings.

In one respect Charlie Russell was far ahead of his contemporaries, who generally said that the only good Indian was a dead Indian. He had profound sympathy for the Plains Indians. His indignation against sharks greedy for their land was acid. "The land hog is the only animal known that lives without a heart." He hated prohibition laws and all kinds of prohibitors; he hated fervidly white men who debauched Indians with liquor. He painted the women and children as well as warriors of several tribes, always with accuracy in physical detail and recognition of their inherent dignity. "Those Indians have been living in heaven for a thousand years," he said to cowman Teddy Blue [Granville Stuart's son-in-law] "and we took it way from 'em for





CHIEF BLOOD BROTHER. 1900. Renner Collection.

forty dollars a month." When sometimes he spoke of "my people" he meant the Horseback Indians. He called the white man "Nature's enemy." The Indians harmonized with Nature and had no more desire to "conquer" it or alter any aspect of it than a cotton-tail rabbit.



MEAT FOR THE WAGONS. 1925. This great action work again proves Russell's surpassing skill as a watercolorist as well as his knowledge of all the ways of the West. This is an accurate picture of how buffalo were killed. Technique was important in hunting buffalo even though they were large and unwieldy animals.

Over and over, he pictured schooners, freight wagons, pack horses, Indian buffalo hunters, cowboys, Northwest Mounted Police, horse thieves, cow thieves, stage robbers and other horseback men. Bull-whackers, mule skinners, stage drivers and their contemporaries of the frontier were as congenial to him as "Nature's Cattle" — among which the coyote and the tortoise were



in as good standing as the elk and the antelope and in better standing than a "Cococola soke." "He can tell what's the matter with a ford by the nois it makes but he wouldn't know that a wet cold horse with a hump in his back is dangerous."

The "increasing purpose" of man's development of passenger vehicles has been to achieve more speed. Charlie Russell has often been styled the artist

of Wild West action. It is true that his range bulls lock horns and his Longhorn cows get on the prod, that his cowboys often shoot, that his cow horses are apt to break in two, that his grizzly bears are hungrier for hot blood than Liver-Eating Johnson; in short, that violence was with him a favorite theme. At the same time, no other picturer of the old West has so lingered in repose. He likes cow horses resting their hips at hitching racks or standing with bridle reins "tied to the ground;" his masterpiece of range life is a trail boss sitting sideways on his horse watching a long herd stringing up a draw as slowly as "the lowing herd" of milk cows winds "o'er the lea" in Gray's Elegy. One of





Reproduced above is one of Russell's most famous wild action pictures involving cowboys on a spree. Entitled SMOKE OF A 45, it was done in 1908, and the original is in the Findlay Galleries, New York. Pretty much the same story ingredients, including the empty whiskey bottle and scattered playing cards, are part of the well known IN WITHOUT KNOCKING, pictured below. This was painted in 1909.





AN UNSCHEDULED STOP. 1913. This stage hold-up subject is a Russell favorite.

his most dramatic paintings is of shadows. The best thing in his superb story of a stampede, "Longrope's Last Guard," in *Trails Plowed Under*, is the final picture of Longrope wrapped in his blankets and put to bed on the lone prairie. "It sounds lonesome, but he ain't alone, cause these old prairies has cradled many of his kind in their long sleep."

In only some of the great paintings in the large C. M. Russell collection at the Historical Society of Montana, in Helena, does drama reside in fast or violent action. There is drama in all Russell art, but it is the drama of potentiality, of shadowing destiny, of something coming, of something left behind. Russell illustrated a littleknown pamphlet entitled Back Trailing on the Old Frontiers. He was a great traveler in that direction; he was as cold as a frosted crowbar towards the fever for being merely, no matter how rapidly, transported, as afflicts so many Americans today.

If the Old West was important to itself, Charlie Russell was important also, for he was—in Art—its most representative figure.

If the Old West is still important in any way to the Modern West, Russell remains equally important. If the Old West is important to far away lands and peoples, Charles M. Russell is important. He not only knew this West, he felt it. It moved him, motivated him, and gave him articulation, as a strong wind on some barren crag shapes all the trees that try to grow there.

Sometimes Russell lacked perspective on the whole of life. Sometimes he overdid violence and action, particularly that brand demanded by appreciators of calendars. But he never betrayed the West.

When one knows and loves the thousands of little truthful details that Charlie Russell put into the ears of horses, the rumps of antelopes, the nostrils of deer, the eyes of buffaloes, the lifted heads of cattle, the lope of coyotes, the stance of a stage driver, the watching of a shadow of himself by a cowboy, the response of an Indian storyteller, the way of a she-bear with her cub, the you-be-damned independence of a monster grizzly, the ignorance of an ambling terrapin, the lay of grass under a breeze; and a whole catalogue of other speaking details dear to any lover of Western life, then one cherishes all of Charles M. Russell.



THE HORSE HUNTERS

By C. M. Russell

A BOUT forty-five years ago a small band of Crows, maybe twenty-five lodges, were camped on the Greybull. As with all plains Indians, horses meant wealth. This camp was rich, for the hills were covered with ponies of all sizes and colors. It was early summer, and among them were many colts.

Two Crow boys squatted on a knoll, wrapped to their beady eyes, one in a white Hudson Bay blanket, the other in a ragged buffalo robe. The hair of both was carefully fashioned in the style of their people—two parts starting over each temple and ending at the scalp lock. The partings were painted bright vermillion, the same as the upper part of the face. The hair between was cropped and stood erect in a brush-like crest. Beneath their robes they wore breech-clouts and leggings, with moccasins. Neither wore a shirt.

These boys were herders, and their ponies grazed at the ends of their elk-skin ropes. They not only watched the pony herds, but their keen eyes saw anything that moved for miles around.

Charlie Russell relates in this charming piece the story of how he came to acquire Monte, a pinto pony which became his favorite mount. Man and horse were almost inseparable friends for 25 years, and as Russell and his wife have both said, they didn't "exactly talk, but they sure savvied each other." The story, which has a faintly mystic quality and abounds with Indian lore, first appeared in "The Roundup," the yearbook of Great Falls high school.

The boy in the buffalo robe beat the ground with the elkhorn handle of his quirt and chanted the war song of his father. Suddenly his companion threw his naked arm from under his blanket and signed, "Medicine," at the same time pointing with his chin to a mare that grazed nearby. The animal was a pinto, and the white parts of her coat were painted in a way that means much to red men. Her foretop and tail wore strips of weatherworn otter skin, and braided in her mane was a skin bag that hid the medicine secrets of her owner.

On the facing page is the fine Indian painting IN ENEMY COUNTRY. This is an accurate portrayal of the Kootenai Indians from west of the Rocky Mountains trespassing for buffalo to the east. At the right is a pen and ink sketch from THE ROUNDUP and also in "More Rawhides." He captioned it thus: "In quiet weather the mumble of a dozen men will travel for miles, but with handtalk a thousand Injuns might be within gunshot an' you'd never know it.



The mare was well known. She was old, but had given many buffalo horses to her master, and the long-legged colt at her flank was also a pinto. His short back and deep chest spoke well for his future years. His were the points of a buffalo horse.

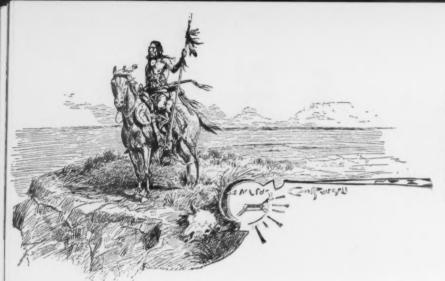
The colt had been acquainted with the world only a few hours, but he had seen, smelt and heard many strange things. He had tried many times to reach the grass with his muzzle, but failed by many inches. The boys saw this, and Small Shield, the one in the ragged robe, said his grandfather had told him that it was good when a little horse did this; he would be strong and would carry his rider a long way between suns.

It is the life story of this pinto colt that I shall tell you.

His first year was spent close to his mother's flank. One morning not long after the day on which my story begins, there was great excitement in camp. The pinto colt, which had been given the name of Paint, saw all the horses among the lodges. The men were catching their best animals. Some were smearing their mounts with paint. Most of the hunters rode one horse and led another. The led horses wore no saddles and sometimes were ridden by naked boys. These horses were decked with feathers and paint and wore a medicine charm in mane or tail. This might be the full skin of a magpie or wolf leg, or possibly a bat's wing, but whatever it was, it meant luck to the owner of the horse.



Both illustrations on this page, along with the lower one on p. 5 and top, p. 68, all appeard originally with this article in THE ROUNDUP.



The drawing on the left, "The Knight of the Plains as He Was," adorned Russell's personal letterhead for many years. Note the symbolism to the right of the skull, denoting "Ah wah cons," or Antelope, Russell's Indian name. Below is an example of Russell's depictions of Indian artists at work. A very similar one is entitled "America's First Printer."

The women were also busy, saddling the quieter ponies or harnessing them to the long-poled travois. As they left the camp the hunters were much in advance of the women, and as the latter traveled slower, they were soon left behind.

Paint noticed that after they had gone some distance, a very old man made a signal and the women ceased talking. Even the children were quiet. Now all conversations were carried on by hands in sign language. Not long after they topped a ridge, and it was here that Paint first smelled the dust and heard the roar of a running herd. The Crows were among the buffalo.

Here the women stopped their ponies. Many of them sang. It meant meat and robes, which spelled life to these wild people.

Paint stood with pricked ears, watching the scene in the valley below. It was an old story to his mother, who quietly cropped the grass. Before long a rider appeared, leading a sweat-covered, panting pony. Then others came and the women moved down the slope.

Paint saw many brown spots upon the prairie. As they neared them he saw that these were horned animals, lying motionless, and he smelled blood.

For five years he lived with the Crows, and became, himself, a buffalo horse, wandering from one country to

another, always in the wake of the herds. One night the Crows were camped on Painted Robe creek. They were in a dangerous country, a land where their enemies, the Blackfeet, often came, so the lodges were placed in a great circle, forming a corral. At night the horses were brought into the enclosure, most of them staked, or picketed, with short ropes.

The Crows had danced, and all slept soundly. A coyote back of a butte barked. It would have fooled any human, but the wind came and told the nose of Paint the truth—it was a man. The dogs knew, too, and many of them howled in answer.

Not long after this, though the night was dark, Paint saw several robed figures among the ponies. They were busy cutting ropes, and a pony, as soon as loosened, would walk quietly from among the lodges. One came to Paint,



At right is one of many fine Russell portrayals of the buffalo at water. Below are two segments of a poignant pen and ink drawing called "Last of the Buffalo Meat." The setting is an Indian camp where men, boy and dog are gathered to scrape off the last bit of meat from the bones. Russell had unbounded compassion for the Indian in his loss of the buffalo, mainstay of life.



and after cutting the rope at the picket pin, coiled it and rubbed her neck. Paint knew it was a stranger and snorted; then jumping to one side, he backed into a tripod of travois, awakening the sleepers. But the stranger held to Paint's rope, and crowding him among the other horses, sprang to his back.

The stranger drove his heels into Paint's flanks and flapped his robe, which he had loosened from his body, over the backs of the animals nearest. The horses were all running now. There was much noise. Guns talked with their yellow tongues into the darkness. Women screamed, dogs howled and men sang their death songs.

A few jumps and Paint, with his rider, was at the edge of the lodges that formed the corral. Gunfire streaked the darkness from most of the lodges, but as no Indian likes to kill a horse both the Crows and their enemies fired low enough to kill a rider, but too high to hit a horse. As Paint passed between the lodges he saw a streak of fire rip the blackness at his side, and he felt his rider clutch his mane and ride as he had seen the Crows at the trading post when they drank something the white man traded them. Then Paint felt something warm and wet on his neck and withers: the rider's legs loosened and his body lurched heavily over the pony's shoulders to the ground, and Paint ran on riderless.







He was glad to leave the lodges. The noise frightened him. He had seen guns and arrows kill buffalo, and this night he felt as though they might kill a horse. They had traveled far and fast when it grew light. The pony saw painted strangers behind him. This was a Piegan war party down from the north, which had surprised the sleeping Crows. When they left Belly river they numbered ten, but now they were only nine. They were mostly young men, led by Bad Wound.

Bad Wound had seen over fifty winters. Time had been good to him, but war had left him not good to look at. He had lost one eye, and a trade ball from a flintlock in the hands of a Crow had broken both jaws, leaving him with a horrible war dimple in each cheek and a crooked mouth.

When the sun came the party halted to change mounts, as the horses under them were winded. The ponies were bunched and each rider dropped his loop on the neck of a fresh one. It was Bad Wound's loop that caught Paint. The chief looked him over at rope's end, and then signed "good and strong" to his painted companions. Walking up for close inspection, Bad Wound's hand felt the hard, dark, brown substance on his mane and withers and knew why his men only counted nine. Then the chief drew the loop from Paint's neck, and slipped his Henry rifle from its skin cover, fired at the pinto as it trotted into the herd. The animal went to its knees; then rolled over and stiffened.

"It was not good," said Bad Wound, "to let a friend walk to the sand hills. The trail is long and I have given him a strong horse."

After the warriors had all caught fresh horses they took the herd to a deep, grassy valley, where their mounts were hobbled and all the ponies were watered and allowed to graze. The men then ate their jerked meat, and all excepting two sentinels, who watched the back country, rolled in their blankets or robes and slept.

The sun was low when they moved again, and when Bad Wound's one eye passed over the traveling herd, his hand went to his mouth in a surprise. He said "Ghost horse," to a near companion, and pointed to a blood-stained horse in the herd. It was Paint, and his head and neck showed fresh blood. Bad



Wound thought his bullet had made a wound that killed, but the lead which was meant for his head had only passed through the neck cord, stunning him for a short time.

They traveled mostly by night, and it was many days before they reached the Piegan camp on the Teton. This was a large camp, a mixture of Piegans, Bloods and Blackfeet. As far as Paint could see the smoked skin lodges dotted the valley. A scout, or wolf, as he is called, reported the coming of Bad Wound's party long before his arrival. so when he and his men with the stolen ponies entered the camp, an old medicine man on a much painted pony rode in advance and told the people: "Two moons have come since these men danced with the sun and left their lodges afoot. Their bellies have often been empty and their tracks sometimes red, but they are brothers of the wolf. with strong hearts. When a Blackfoot goes to war he may never return, or his hair may be whitened by winters when he comes, but if he reaches his lodge, whether it has been a few suns or many winters, his feet are not sore, for he has an enemy's horse under him. I have said these are wolves, and the wolf women will give them meat. It is good."

As the party rode into camp hundreds of dogs slunk silently among the lodges. They did not bark, as their only language is the howl of their wilder cousin, the wolf. Every travois and extra lodge pole was hung with buffalo flesh, and the wind was heavy with the smell of meat.

In the Piegan camp there was much feasting and dancing, but there were five with their faces painted black; a father, mother, two sisters and a young wife of Calf Robe, the one left dead among the Crow lodges. These people did not join in the merriment, but squatted on the butte, crying and cutting their arms and legs while those in camp sang and stepped time to the big



drum. And when the mourners returned to camp, Calf Robe's wife had but two fingers on her left hand. She had given the others to the sun to show her great sorrow.

Then Bad Wound came to Calf Robe's father and gave him three horses and said: "Old Man, I would give you the horse your son rode, but he is a ghost horse. I tried to give him to your son, but the horse would not die. It is not good to give a friend a pony that dead men ride. Three times while I slept the spotted horse came to me. Your son rode him, but he was dead and the pony's back was red with blood. He is a good horse, but I will never ride him. My heart is afraid and I have said that it is not good to give a friend what you fear yourself."

Next spring the Piegans were camped on a river called The Banks that Fell on Them, when a few whites came to buy ponies. Among them was a very young boy and a man with a gray beard, who was the boy's companion.





When Bad Wound led out Paint, the boy was much pleased, and Gray Beard counted out forty-five silver dollars into the hand of Bad Wound.

So now Paint had a white master. He had never felt a bit in his mouth before. His had always been two half-hitches of rawhide thong about his under jaw, and the white man's saddle with its two cinches were strange to him. His back knew the halfbreed pad and other Indian saddles.

Paint was gentle, but as all Indians mount from the off side, it was days before he would allow the boy to mount from the near side. The pinto pony was not to be alone, as the boy already owned a black mare which packed his blankets and grub.

Some days later, Paint, the mare and their master joined a hunter and trapper who lived in the mountains. One night as they were cooking supper, the old hunter told the boys to trade off the mare. "Lady hosses," said he, "are like their human sisters. They get notions of goin' home, an' no gentleman cayuse would think of letting a lady go alone. Judging from actions, there ain't a cayuse in our bunch that ain't a perfect gentleman, so to play safe, boy, you stake that mare."

A few days later the boy traded the mare for a one-eyed, buckskin cayuse.

For two years the boy lived with the hunter. The next time he appears in our story he is wrangling horses for a trail herd which was traveling north. This herd was turned loose on Ross's Fork, where there was a big roundup camp. Here the boy was hired to nightherd four hundred saddle horses. This camp reminded Paint somewhat of the homes of his early wild owners, but the lodges were not tall like those of the Crows or Piegans.





For many years Paint, with his master, followed the white man's buffalo. Once they went north and again the pony was among the lodges of the Piegans. When the big cow herds moved north of the Missouri. Paint and his master were with them.

One night in a little cow town on Milk river, Paint, among other ponies, was tied to a rack in front of a place where cow men drank, sang and made merry. The night was warm, and the door was open, so Paint could see inside. There was some hard talk, and Paint knew men well enough to understand that it was war talk of the white man. He saw a man pull a gun and fire twice; then back through the door with the smoking weapon in his hand. Another man lay on the floor very still. The man who had fired the gun stepped to the hitching rack, mounted a horse and rode away into the darkness. Paint knew then that the white man was no different from the red. They both kill their own kind.

Some years later two riders, one leading a pack horse, traveled between the Missouri river and the Highwood mountains. One of them pointed to a heavy smoke that showed on the horizon, a little south of west. "There's where we camp tonight," said he.

It was dark when they reached the town which the smoke had led them to, and their ponies, which knew no lights but nature's, jumped the great shadows

made by the arc lights at the street crossings. They passed rows of saloons, dance halls and gambling houses, and after inquiring the way of a bystander, rode to the Park stables, where they unsaddled and stripped the pack horse of their bedding and grub.

Now, under the overhanging light of

the stable. I will describe the riders and their mounts. One rider was rather slender with black hair and eyes. The other was of medium height, with light hair worn rather long. Both men were dressed as cow hands, and the only difference in their clothes was a bright colored. French halfbreed sash, worn by the light-haired man. The latter's mount was a rangy gray, branded Diamond G-one of the old Geddis herd. The pack horse which he led was a bay pinto.

The darker man rode a brown, strongly-built broncho, which snorted at every strange thing he saw.

The name of this town was Great Falls. The rider of the brown bronc was Henry Stough. The other, who rode the gray, was the writer of this story. The pinto pack horse was Paint, called Monty by his owner.

When Paint died near Great Falls he had been with his master twentyfive years.





FEW WORDS ABOUT MYSELF CM Russell

(A personal introduction to "Trails Plowed Under," written by Charles M. Russell a few months before his death in 1926.) Copyright 1927 by Doubleday & Co., Inc. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

THE PAPERS have been kind to me—many times more kind than true. Although I worked for many years on the range, I am not what the people think a cowboy should be. I was neither a good roper nor rider. I was a night wrangler. How good I was I'll leave it for the people I worked for to say—there are still a few of them living. In the spring I wrangled horses, in the fall I herded beef. I worked for the big outfits and always held my job.

I have many friends among cowmen and cowpunchers. I have always been what is called a good mixer—I had friends when I had nothing else. My friends were not always within the law, but I haven't said how law-abiding I was myself. I haven't been too bad nor too good to get along with.

Life has never been too serious with me—I lived to play and I'm playing yet. Laughs and good judgment have saved me many a black eye, but I don't laugh at other's tears. I was a wild young man, but age has made me gentle. I drank, but never alone, and when I drank it was no secret. I am still friendly with drinking men.

My friends are mixed—preachers, priests, and sinners. I belong to no church, but am friendly toward and respect all of them. I have always liked horses and since I was eight years old have always owned a few.

I am old-fashioned and peculiar in my dress. I am eccentric (that is a polite way of saying you're crazy). I believe in luck and have had lots of it.

To have talent is no credit to its owner; what man can't help he should get neither credit nor blame for—it's not his fault. I am an illustrator. There are lots better ones, but some worse. Any man that can make a living doing what he likes is lucky, and I'm that. Any time I cash in now, I win.

-Charles M. Russell





BECAUSE I valued his friendship as one of the biggest things that ever came into my life and because his memory to me will always be a most dear and precious treasure, it is difficult to write of Charlie Russell without over-indulging myself in superlatives.

Now that he is dead the world is finding out what some had found out while he was alive-namely, that Charlie Russell was one of the greatest creative craftsmen of his race and times, and certainly was the aptest delineator of the most dramatic, the most picturesque -and also, the most entirely vanished phases of Americanism that our country since the civil war has produced. Supposedly there should come up a man of his genius and his scope of power; a man with an eve like his to see and appraise. and a hand like his to fix color and background upon canvas with paints or build into the enduring bronze authentic figure of beast or man-which isn't probable, because no state within a century is likely to produce two Charlie Russells -that man still would fall short seeing

Fortunate Friendship

By Irving S. Cobb

The able humorist-writer reflects on his valued association with C.M.R.

that the scene has changed, that the Old West has become the New West, that the range riders, the red warriors, the buttes and the settings drawn by Charlie's brush and set into the modeler's clay by Charlie's fingers either have gone altogether or very soon will altogether be gone.

So much for the artist. Of the spirit of the man, the essence of him, the soul of him, I could write a book and yet not say the half of what I'd like to say. A keen but gentle philosophy; a gorgeous darting wit which tickled but never stung; a charity for all mankind which was deep as the Montana basins he loved and as broad as the Montana plains he had ridden; a keenness of mental vision which enabled him to look past the surface of things to the true inwardness of things; a memory for storing up the folklore, the humor and the tragedy of

This heartfelt tribute was written in December 1934 by the able humorist, exclusively for the Lewistown (Mont.) DEMOCRAT-NEWS. It is added testimony of the esteem in which the Cowboy Artist was held by his contemporaries and it explains why such adulation, rather than diminishing, continues to grow and spread far beyond the borders of Montana and the nation.

It is particularly fitting that this tribute be reprinted, now that the time draws near for the permanent placing in Statuary Hall in Washington of the attractive statue of Russell executed by Montana sculptor, John B. Weaver. Readers will note that Cobb in 1934 suggested that Charile Russell was one who possessed such unusual greatness that he should represent his adopted state in permanent memorial in the nation's capitol. See p. 91.



bygone days in cowtown or bunk house or mining camp; and with this an ability to so deftly and so accurately describe it all-stage, actors, language and plotthat, listening to his story telling you realized here also was a supreme word painter and you marvelled that one man could possess in such degree two gifts so closely related and yet so wide apart: a lover of natural things and of genuine things; a lover of friendships and of children and of horses and dogs-ves and under-dogs; a genius whose culture came not of books but out of the heart of a born gentleman; a man who could be proud of his talents without being conceited over it: a creature as free from guile, vanity, selfishness and affectation as any I ever knew-that was your Charles Russell and if my affection qualifies me to claim a share in the great heritage, my Charlie Russell.

If I were charged with the choosing of the two figures most amply qualified to represent the state of Montana in our national hall of fame at our national capitol, I should choose not some strutting political leader whose very name like his personality and his policies and his state craft, if any, will by succeeding generations inevitably be forgotten; neither some captain of industry however brilliant his developing touch might have been, since any human institution is but the lengthening shadow of some indi-

vidual just as the individual very often is but the overgrown child of the institution; nor yet some military commander whose record was written with the blood of dead soldiers and whose repute most surely would turn to dust as the bones of those dead likewise become dust—no, none of these would I choose.

One of my choices would be the statue of one of those heroic pathfinders who hacked a future commonwealth out of a ramping wilderness and made a road for the white man's civilization to follow over and sowed the seeds for the fruitage which is today yours and which hereafter will be your children's and your children's children. And for my other choice I'd take the homely shape of dear Charlie Russell—not that he needs any monument to perpetuate his greatness, because he fashioned his own monuments: monuments which will forever testify to his skill and forever will perpetuate the romantic splendors of Montana's bygone days-but because in thus honoring his memory you'd be honoring that son of yours who was most original of any, most creative of any, most versatile of any, most typical of any and, I claim, most lovable of any; and because you'd be honoring that immortal part of you which was and is the best of you and because you'd be honoring yourselves.

(Concluded on following Page)







After the turn of the 20th century, there came to Russell's home and studio, many times, a talented Danish painter who made his living then as a worker on the Old Montana Central railroad. This man was Olaf C. Seltzer. They became close friends—and Seltzer later was recognized as an able contemporary artist. These choice watercolors, now owned by Dick Flood of Idaho Falls, Idaho, are among the best portraits ever painted of Charles M. Russell. All rights reserved by the owner.

And if there were but one statue to be set up instead of two, if one niche were to be left vacant until a form worthy to fill it had arisen against the Montana skyline, I'd still cast my vote for Charles M. Russell, Montana's old master—because I tell you the mould out of which he came has by the hand of the Great Potter been broken and we shall not soon look upon his like again.



STORY TELLER

"I always did say that you [Russell] could tell a story better than any man that ever lived. If I could a got you to quit that crazy painting idea, and took up something worth while like joke telling, why I would a set you out there on the stage at the tail end of an old chuck wagon, hunched up on an old roll of Sougans and a prop campfire burning in your face, say you would have been the biggest thing that ever fit in while the Glorified Beauties was changing their color of powder. But you would dab around with them old brushes, and squeeze a handful of mud into the shape of some old 'limber neck' bronk, You looked to me at times like you would ruther be a good dirt dobber, or a sort of an old painter than just about anything."-Will Rogers

Will James, cowboy author and artist, in his earlier days, sought Russell's advice on how he might find a market for his pictures. He visited Charlie in his little log studio in Great Falls. They talked while Charlie painted. When James asked how he might get his work before the public, Charlie replied without hesitation, "Hang 'em in the saloons; that's how I got started!"



"Any man that can make a living doing what he likes is lucky, and I'm that. Any time I cash in now, I win."—Charles M. Russell.

"I have many friends among cowmen and cowpunchers. I have always been what is called a good mixer—I had friends when I had nothing else."—Charles M. Russell, too long before had trapped in the Dakotas and Montana and had brought their precious bundles of furs to St. Louis.

These Mountain Men having sold their wares, bought new supplies and again and again returned to the adventuresome frontier. Their tales of the wild and untamed West which they said was becoming too tame, fired the imagination of Charlie, and he was determined to risk everything rather than face the dull, confining life of the east. His parents finally decided to let him go to the wild region, convinced, of course, that a year in the wilds would cure him and that he would gladly return to his cozy, splendid home and settle down. They didn't know their Charlie, either, or his mind.



Indians Discovering Lewis and Clark

Having outlined this picture of life in the East, I shall now describe briefly the picture of the West at that time. The mad gold rush to California in 1849. I am convinced, was a vaporous incident because most of the Forty-niners were interested only in acquiring wealth and then returning home. For everyone who honestly intended to prospect for gold there were probably hundreds of rascals who intended to murder the man who dug hard for gold, and jump his claim. It is my recollection that there were some 2,000 recorded murders in San Francisco in 1849. Probably many more were never recorded.

After the California boom faded many prospectors and miners went to Virginia City, Nevada; on to Bannack, Montana Territory; then to Virginia City, M. T.; and finally to Last Chance Gulch where present Helena stands. Some, not interested in gold, soon established themselves as cattlemen in Oregon without realizing that they had no market for their cattle. By 1880 vast herds had accumulated in Oregon. Many were later trailed to Montana and Wyoming, along with the greater numbers from Texas.

When young Charlie first arrived in Montana in 1880, the Vigilantes had long since put a stop to murders and outlaws in the raw camps; and these had become almost typical, relatively tame frontier towns, but highly colorful by today's standards. Some former miners had gone to ranching in eastern and central Montana, but it still was only four years after the Custer Massacre in 1876. Most of Montana, Wyoming and the Dakota Territories remained virgin, unfenced, unsettled and untamed frontier, beautiful beyond description.

The impression it made upon the mind of this pensive, deep-thinking, artistic young boy immediately altered an entire view of life. Here, in a wonderful country where nature had outdone itself, he observed that the Indian lived in complete freedom, freedom such as the white man had never known—his kind of freedom!

The full panorama of life which Charlie Russell first saw here was absolutely wonderful and to his liking, and for him it must never be changed, he thought then. Man could never improve upon what nature had done here. This first impression explains fully Russell's reaction to changes—mostly bad—later brought about by the white man's "civilization." One can well imagine the depth of his feelings years later when sadly he wrote, "The west is dead, you may lose a sweetheart, but you won't forget her."

There was never a mercenary hair in Charlie Russell's head. To his mind the Indian had been the richest man in the world. Great wealth could never buy anything like this, and nature had given it all free. Had he been mercenary, Charlie most likely would have become a buffalo hunter like so many others, wantonly killing thousands of buffalo only for their hides at a dollar a head. But he had none of the killer instinct and he loved nature infinitely. He packed a six-shooter as the other frontiersmen did, of course, but he never shot a man in his life, and few animals.

Russell was the perfect type of human being, not happy unless he created. He found an immediate natural outlet for his great creative instincts by first drawing pictures of his glorious new adopted state and its people; and later by painting them accurately and well.

But along with this remarkable artistic talent, Charlie possessed this photographic mind which enabled him to get the same authentic detail of pictures which modern artists sometimes fail to achieve, even when they have the camera to refresh their memories.

Charlie, as he matured, was of a retiring nature, extremely modest and not a bit aggressive. He never called himself an artist (even when the critics acclaimed him) but rather an illustrator. Earlier, when he worked as a cowboy, he frankly stated that he was not a top bronc rider or roper, either. But how many cowpunchers ever were?



Inside The Lodge

His knowledge of the Old Frontier West, its people and their activities, was amazingly thorough and well-founded. The most intelligent Indian in later years could find no fault with the accuracy of his Indian subject paintings, down to minute beadwork patterns. Likewise, I have never known a cowman able to question the accuracy of the smallest details in his pictures of the old cow outfits, even down to the right brand on the right animal.

Only those who knew the amazing intellect of Charlie Russell can fully appreciate what a splendid and complex character he was. Stories can yet be written about the depth of every picture he painted, and every figure he created in wax.

Montana can well be proud of this adopted son, who delineated so well her colorful, exciting frontier days; and whose body rests now in that simple grave in Great Falls, marked Charles M. Russell. He was a remarkable human, whose mind was one of his least-noticed, but greatest, attributes. He was a true friend of mankind, if ever there was one.



Bronc To Breakfast

ART ADVICE

Charlie Russell passed along this advice to fellow artist Will James in a letter topped by one of his famous little water-colors dated May 12, 1920: "James as I said before use paint but dont get smeary let somebody elce do that keep on making real men horse and cows of corse the real artistick may never know you but nature loving regular men will and thair is more of the last kind in this old world an thair the kind you want to shake hands with ..."

FRIEND

In his able, The Charles M. Russell Book, Harold McCracken has this to say about the Cowboy Artist: "He was by nature extremely reticent, modest, and insular; but there was something about this rough cowboy artist that drew men into his friendship. It happened in the old days of roughneck saints and sinners, both whites and blanket Indians, and it happened later with the [most] eminent individuals he met."

My Charlie

By Nancy Cooper Russell



from GOOD MEDICINE by Charles M. Russell. Copyright 1929, 1930 by Nancy C. Russell. Reprinted by permission of Doubleday & Co., Inc.

HARLIE Russell was what they call a good mixer. The gay times he was having in the big town interfered with his work, so in October, 1895, he decided to visit a friend in Cascade and fill some orders for pictures.

There was great excitement at the Roberts' home, where I lived, as a distinguished guest was expected. Charlie Russell, the cowboy artist, was coming for a visit. He knew a great deal about Indians, cowboys, and the Wild West. The Robertses had known him since he landed in Helena in 1880.

Just about supper-time, there was a jingle of spur-rowels on the back steps; then, Mr. Roberts brought his cowboy friend into the kitchen, where Mrs. Roberts and I were getting the supper on the table.

Charlie and I were introduced. The picture that is engraved on my memory of him is of a man a little above average height and weight, wearing a soft shirt, a Stetson hat on the back of his blonde head, tight trousers, held up by a "half-breed sash" that clung just above the hip bones, high-heeled riding boots on very small, arched feet. His face was Indian-like, square jaw and chin, large mouth, tightly closed firm lips, the under protruding slightly beyond the short upper, straight nose, high cheek bones, gray-blue deep-set eyes that seemed to see everything, but with an expression of honesty and understanding. He could not see wrong in anybody. He never believed any one did a bad act intentionally; it was always an accident. His hands were goodsized, perfectly shaped, with long, slender fingers. He loved jewelry and always wore three or four rings. They

would not have been Charlie's hands any other way. Everyone noticed his hands, but it was not the rings that attracted, but the artistic, sensitive hands that had great strength and charm. When he talked, he used them a lot to emphasize what he was saying, much as an Indian would do.

Charlie was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on March 19th, 1864. As a small boy, he loved to hear about the pioneer life that had broken through and was supplanting the frontier with man-made civilization. He was interested in the stories of the fur and Indian traders and the outfitting of boats that crawled up the Missouri River to Fort Benton, Montana. The levees of his home town

This biographical sketch on the life of Charles M. Russell was written by his widow, Nancy C. Russell, and was used in the book, "Good Medicine," a collection of the artist's pungent letters to his friends. All of the letters glow with the humor and philosophy of Russell and all are illustrated in his incomparable way. Nancy, who became Mrs. Russell in 1896, was given credit by the artist as well as by everyone who knew him for recognizing the true worth of his artistic achievements and for asking and getting more realistic prices for them. Before his marriage, Russell frequently gave away gems of art which are now virtually priceless, or painted a picture to buy a round of drinks for his friends.



This is the way Helena, Montana Territory, looked about the time that Charlie Russell, 16-year-old greenhorn from St. Louis, first saw it. In this sketch of her husband's life, Nancy Russell tells about the arrival at this roaring mining camp of "Kid" Russell and Pike Miller, his employer for a brief time.

The photograph at the beginning of this article is a rare one, taken at the time Nancy and Charlie were married in 1896.

had an irresistible fascination for the lad and he planned to run away and turn Indian fighter. School had no charm for him. He played hookey and the hours he should have been in school, he spent at the river front watching and talking with all sorts of men, unconsciously starting to build the foundation for his life work.

After several unsuccessful attempts to get West, he was sent to a military school at Burlington, New Jersey. He was made to walk guard for hours because book study was not in his mind. He would draw Indians, horses, or animals for any boy who would do his arithmetic in exchange. He loved American history, especially that of the country west of the Mississippi River. The teachers gave him up because he could not be made to study books—but pioneer life—yes, it was absorbed wherever he touched it, and made such an impression that it never left him.

When the military school failed to hold him or teach him application, he returned home. His father decided to try another way, so one day he said, "Would you like to go West, Charles? A gentleman I know is going to Montana and I was thinking of letting you go with him. You will stay but a few weeks, I imagine, until you will be glad to get back home and then go to work in school."

So, early in March, just before Charlie's sixteenth birthday, he started with Pike Miller by way of the Utah Northern Railroad and stage coach to Helena, Montana.

When they arrived there, the streets were lined with freight outfits. He saw bull teams, with their dusty whackers, swinging sixteen-foot lashes with rifle-like reports over seven or eight yoke teams; their string of talk profane and hide-blistering as their whips, but understood by every bull, mule-skinner, or jerk-line man. The jerk-line man would be astride the saddled nigh-wheeler, jerking the lines that led to the little span of leaders. These teams were sometimes horses and sometimes mules, and twelve to fourteen span to a team, often pulling three wagons chained together, all handled by one line.

It was also ration-time for the Indians in that section, so the red men were standing or riding in that quiet way of theirs, all wearing skin leggings and robes. They did not have civilized clothes. The picturesqueness of it all filled the heart and soul of this youthful traveler and he knew that he had found his country, the place he would make his home; but he did not know what a great part he was to take in recording its history for the coming generations.

In Helena, Mr. Miller outfitted, buying a wagon and four horses, two of them being Charlie's. With their load of grub, they pulled for the Judith Basin country, where Miller had a sheep ranch. The wagon trails were very dim and rough and they had a hard time crossing the Crazy Mountains, as one of their horses played out. But they did arrive—a very weary outfit. Charlie said that the trip settled it with him

so far as driving a team and wagon was concerned. Thereafter, pack and saddle horses were his favorite way of traveling and he never changed. He often said to me, "You can have a car, but I'll stick to the hoss; we understand each other better."

He did not stay with Miller but a few weeks, as the sheep and Charlie did not get along at all well. When they split up, Charlie didn't think Miller missed him much, as he was considered pretty "ornery."

He took his two horses and went to a stage station where he had heard they needed a stock-herder, but word of his dislike for the sheep job had gotten there ahead of him and they were not ought to feel pretty good to the inside of a kid like you."

So Charlie threw in with him. The man was Jake Hoover, hunter and trapper, and a lifelong friend to the boy he met there on the trail. Hoover's manner of life suited young Russell, who longed for the open country and its native people.

Jake advised him to get rid of his horses, as they were big team horses and one a mare. Jake said this country was no place for a lady-horse; if she took a notion, she would leave and take every other horse with her.

In a few days, he met a bunch of Piegan Indians and traded for two smaller horses, one a pinto, that he



willing to trust their horses with him, so he did not get the job.

Leading his pack horses and carrying a very light bed, Charlie pulled out for the Judith River, where he made camp and picketed his horses. He had a lot of thinking to do. As he unrolled and started to make his bed, a man's voice from out of the shadows said, "Hello, Kid! What are you doing here?"

Half scared, he turned to find a stranger sizing him up.

"Camping," he answered.

"Where's your grub?" the stranger inquired.

"Haven't any."

"Where you going?"

"To find a job."

"Where you from?"

On being told, he said, "You better come over and camp with me; I got a lot of elk meat, beans and coffee. That named "Monte." They were kids together and, when Monte died in 1904, Charlie had ridden and packed him thousands of miles. They were always together and people who knew one, knew the other. They didn't exactly talk, but they sure savvied each other.

Charlie lived with Jake about two years. They had six horses; a saddle horse apiece and pack animals. They hunted and trapped, selling bear, deer and elk meat to the settlers, and sending the furs and pelts which they got in to Fort Benton to trade.

In the Spring of 1881, Charlie's father sent him money to come home. To acknowledge it, Charlie wrote a letter in which he said, "Thanks for the money, which I am returning. I can't use it, but some day I will make enough; then I will come home to see you folks."



By the Spring of 1882, he had saved enough to return to St. Louis, where he stayed about four weeks. He could not resist the call to Montana, so he came back with a cousin, Jim Fulkerson, who died of mountain fever at Billings two weeks after they arrived.

Again alone, with four bits in his pocket and 200 miles between him and Hoover, things looked mighty rocky. He struck a fellow he knew and borrowed a horse and saddle from him until he could get to his own; then, started for the Judith Basin country.

There was still a little snow, as it was early in April, but after riding about fifteen miles, he struck a cow outfit, coming in to receive a thousand dogies for the Twelve Z and V outfit up in the Basin. The boss, John Cabler, hired him to night-wrangle horses. They were about a month on the trail and turned loose at Ross Fork, where they were met by the Judith roundup.

Charlie was getting back to Hoover and the country he knew, but he'd had a taste of the cow business and wanted more. The Judith roundup foreman had just fired his night-herder and Cabler gave him a good recommend, so he took the herd. Charlie said it was a lucky thing no one knew him, or he never would have gotten the job.

When old man True asked who he was, Ed Older said, "I think it's 'Kid' Russell."

"Who's Kid Russell?"

"Why," says True, "if that's 'Buckskin Kid,' I'm bettin' we'll be afoot in the morning." So you see the kind of a reputation he had. He was spoken of as "that ornery Kid Russell," but not among cowmen. He held their bunch and at that time they had about four hundred saddle horses. That same Fall, old man True hired him to night-herd beef, and for the most part of eleven years, as he says, he sang to their horses and cattle.

In the Winter of 1886, there was a bunch wintering at the O H Ranch. They had pretty nice weather till Christmas. When the snow came, there was two feet on the level. The stage had to have men stick willows in the snow so they would know where the road was. Those willows, on parts of the road, were standing in May.

There was good grass in the Fall. The country was all open—no fences. The horses went through the Winter, fat, since they could paw, breaking the snow's crust and getting through to grass. A cow won't; they are not rustlers. They would go in the brush, hump up and die; so the wolves fattened on the cattle.

Charlie was living at the ranch. There were several men there and among them was Jesse Phillips, the owner of the O H. One night, Jesse had a letter from Louis Kaufman, one of the biggest cattlemen in the country, who lived in Helena. Louie wanted to know how the cattle were doing. Jesse said, "I must write a letter and tell Louie how tough it is." Charlie was sitting at the table with Jesse and said, "I'll make a sketch to go with it." So he made a little watercolor about the size of a postcard and said to Jesse, "Put that in your letter."



Jesse looked at it and said, "Hell, Louie don't need a letter; that will be enough."

The cow in the picture was a Bar R cow, one of Kaufman's brand. On the picture Charlie wrote, "Waiting for a Chinook and nothing else."

That little watercolor drawing made Charlie famous among stockmen and was the wedge which opened up the field of history in this part of the West for him. He still did not know he was about to graduate from this School of Nature, to take up his life work.



This is probably the most familiar of all Russell works, and was originally done to illustrate to a cattle owner the fact that his herd of 5,000 had perished in the terrible winter of 1886-7.

In 1888, he went to the then Northwest Territory and stayed about six months with the Blood Indians. They are one branch of the Blackfeet tribes. He became a great friend of a young Indian, named "Sleeping Thunder." Through their friendship, the older men of the tribe grew to know Charlie and

wanted him to marry one of their women and become one of them. The Red-Men of our Northwest love and think of Charlie as a kind of medicine man because he could draw them and their life so well.

He learned to speak Piegan a little but could use the sign language well enough to get along anywhere with any tribe of the plains that he ever met, as the sign talk is universal among the American Plains Indians. Whether with white man or red, with a lump of wax or a few tubes of paint, he drew, painted and modeled, all his spare time, just for the satisfaction of recording what he saw and to entertain his friends. Still, he did not dream of the great work ahead of him.





After Russell's death, Will Rogers wrote this memorable paragraph in the introduction to "Trails Plowed Under," a collection of the artist's favorite stories: "At first we couldn't understand why they moved you, but we can now, They had every kind of a great man up there, but they just dident have any great Cowboy Artist like you. Shucks! on the luck, there was only one of you and he couldn't use you both places."

In the Spring of 1889, he went back to Judith to his old job of wrangling. The captain was Horace Brewster, the same man who had hired him in 1882, on Ross Fork. All these years there had been the mixing with, studying the habits of, and drawing all the different types of men and animal life.

Living with a trapper, he got close to the hearts of the wild animals. He saw them in their own country; got to know their habits. Knew them with their young and saw their struggle against their enemies, especially Man.

But the West was changing. Stage coaches and steamboats carried the white people west, while the freighters with bull, mule and horse teams, played their great part in bringing what we call civilization to this Northwest country.



Charlie was here to see the change. He did not like the new; so started to record the old in ink, paint and clay. He liked the old ways best. He was a child of the West before wire or rail spanned it; now civilization choked him.

Even in 1889, when the Judith country was becoming well settled and the sheep had the range, he resented the change and followed the cattle north to the Milk River, trying to stay in an open range country.

In the Fall of 1891, he received a letter from Charlie Green, a gambler, better known as "Pretty Charlie," who was in Great Falls, saying that if he would come to that camp, he could make \$75.00 a month and grub. It looked good, so Charlie saddled his gray, packed Monte, the pinto, and took the trail. When he arrived, Green introduced him to Mr. K., who pulled out a contract as long as a stake rope, for him to sign.

Everything he modeled or painted for one year was to be Mr. K.'s Charlie balked. Then K. wanted him to paint from early morning until six at night, but Charlie argued there was some difference in painting and sawing wood. So they split up and Charlie went to work for himself. He joined a bunch of cowpunchers, a round-up cook and a prizefighter out of work. They rented a shack on the south side. The feed was very short at times but they wintered.

Next Spring, he went back to Milk River and once more lived the range life. But it had changed. That Autumn, he returned to Great Falls, took up the paint brush and never rode the range again.





The daughter of Ben Roberts, Mrs. Charles Sheridan, presented this interesting pencil sketch depicting the early married life of the Russells, to the Montana Historical Society in 1954.

We met in October, 1895, and were married in September, 1896. With \$75.00 we furnished a one room shack there in Cascade, where we lived one year. There was little chance to get orders for pictures in such a small town, so we moved to Great Falls, where Charlie could meet a few travelers and get an occasional order.

Charles Schatzlein, of Butte, Montana, was one good frend. He had an art store, and gave Charlie a good many orders, making it possible for us to pay our house rent and feed, but, as Charlie said, "The grass wasn't so good."

One time Mr. Schatzlein came to visit us.

"Do you know, Russell," he said, "you don't ask enough for your pictures. That last bunch you sent me, I sold one for enough to pay for six. I am paying you your price, but it's not enough. I think your wife should take hold of that end of the game and help you out."

From that time, the prices of Charlie's work began to advance until it was possible to live a little more comfortably. In 1900, Charlie got a small legacy from his mother, which was the nest egg that started the home we live in. After the cottage home was finished and furnished, Charlie said, "I want a log studio some day, just a cabin like I used to live in."

..... CONTRACT AND ARMONEST.

Agreement between Charles Marion Russell, of Oreat Falls, Montana, and filliam Bleasdell Cameron, of Saint Paul, Hinnesota, made 30th. of September, 1897.

The said C.M.Russell agrees to make for the said W.B.Cameron twenty black and white oil paintings about 84 by 18 inches in size each and trenty pen sketches about 18 by 8 inches each, composing a pictorial history of western life, the whole to be completed within a reasonable time, or by the first of January, 1896, if possible.

The said W.S. Cameron agrees to pay to the said C.M.Russell the sum of fifteen dollars for each painting upon deliveryand fifty dollars upon delivery of the pen sketches.

It is further agreed between the parties that the paintings are
to be reproduced and advertised from month to month in the TESTERN
FIELD AND STREAM, published at Saint | aul, Minnesota, and that they
are also to be published in two books, upon completion, the paintings
in one and the sketches in another, such books to be placed for sale
upon the market, and that the said C.M.Ruesell shall have a one-third
interest in the copyrights of such books and of all profits which may
arise from their sale as aforessis.

Marrie Russell

O /// (Pussel)
on behalf of himself and for
seatorn Field and Stream.



Great Falls, Montana, about 1918.

That year, 1903, the studio was built on the lot adjoining the house. Charlie did not like the mess of building, so he took no more than a mild interest in the preparations. Then, one day, a neighbor said, "What are you doing at your place, Russell, building a corral?"

That settled it. Charlie just thought the neighbors didn't want the cabin mixed in with the civilized dwellings and felt sure they would get up a petition to prevent our building anything so unsightly as a log house in their midst. But way down in his heart, he wanted that studio. It was the right kind of a work-shop for him, but he was worried at what he thought the neighbors would say, so he said he would have nothing to do with it.



Charlie and Nancy on an outing.

He made no further comment, nor did he go near it until one evening, Mr. Trigg, one of our dearest friends, came over and said, "Say, son, let's go see the new studio. That big stone fireplace looks good to me from the outside. Show me what it's like from the inside."

Charlie looked at me kind of queer. The supper dishes had to be washed. That was my job just then, so Charlie took Mr. Trigg out to see his new studio that he had not been in. When they came back into the house, the dishes were all put away.

Charlie was saying, "That's going to be a good shack for me. The bunch can come visit, talk and smoke, while I paint."

From that day to the end of his life he loved that telephone pole building more than any other place on earth and never finished a painting anywhere else. The walls were hung with all kinds of things given him by Indian friends, and his horse jewelry, as he called it, that had been accumulated on the range, was as precious to him as a girl's jewel box to her.

One of Charlie's great joys was to give suppers cooked over the fire, using a Dutch oven and frying pan, doing all the cooking himself. The invited guests were not to come near until the food was ready. There was usually bachelor bread, boiled beans, fried bacon, or if it was Fall, maybe deer meat, and coffee; the dessert must be dried apples. A flour sack was tucked in his sash for an apron and, as he worked, the great beads of perspiration would gather and roll down hs face and neck.

When it was ready, with a big smile, he would step to the door with the gladdest call the oldtime roundup cook could give—"Come and get it!" There was a joyous light in his eyes when anyone said the bread was good, or asked for a second helping of anything. When no more could be eaten, he would say, "Sure you got enough; lots of grub here."

Then the coffee pot would be pushed to one side, frying pan and Dutch oven pulled away from the fire, and Charlie would get the "makins." Sitting on his heels among us, he would roll a cigarette with those long, slender fingers, light it, and in the smoke, drift back in his talk to times when there were very few, if any, white women in Montana. It was Nature's country. If that cabin could only tell what those log walls have heard!



The world knows about his paintings and modeling, but his illustrated letters are novel because of his spelling and lack of book learning. The perfection of his humor is not of books, but comes direct from the life in the West that he lived and loved.

The State University of Montana is not prodigal in giving honors, but Charlie justified himself as the greatest student and teacher of the West in his time and so won the fourth honorary degree of Doctor of Laws ever given by that University. Charlie said, "Nature has been my teacher; I'll leave it to you whether she was a good one or not."...



Charlie and Nancy Russell are pictured here early in their marriage with the artist's favorite horse, Monty. Below is the bronze, WHEN THE BEST OF RIDERS QUIT, Historical Society of Montana collection.





Joe De Yong, author of this article, is pictured (right) with the late Con Price, one of Charlie Russell's closest Montana cowboy friends. This picture was taken in California about 15 years ago.

THE Old West never acclaimed a more loyal, uncommon, or more truly modest son than Charlie Russell. It is indeed Montana's lasting good fortune that Fate should have seen fit to endow this one of the Treasure State's early-day and numerous footloose, "horseback drifters" so that he could eventually record the lusty, colorful life of her amazing frontier period.

To become nationally recognized as the first (and unquestionably, the most gifted) of the few genuine "cowboy artists," was in itself remarkable, for Russell was wholly self-trained. In fact, to those capable of intimately judging the man and his works, it appeared certain now that the slow, always selfreliant, and characteristically stubborn development of Charlie's many-sided creative ability hinged solely upon his having spent his earliest years in such wilderness surroundings. In themselves, these wild, isolated, vast surroundings seemed to spark his romantic and always-original outlook. His advice in later years to at least one hopeful young beginning artist was: "Stick to Mother Nature, she'll never fool you!" And this was one measure of Russell's perceptive greatness.

MODEST SON OF THE OLD WEST

An intimate glimpse of the Great Master by one of his few living students . . .

JOE DE YONG

Fate decreed, too, that Russell be born on the outskirts of St. Louis, Missouri, toward the close of the Civil War. This was at the historic moment when that place was still regarded as the gateway to the Great Plains, the upper Missouri River, and whatever lay beyond the strange Rockies. It is not surprising, therefore, that the constantly-changing, chance-gathered assortment of frontier-types and the riff-raff spawned by the

JOE DE YONG is one of the privileged few who can truthfully say that they sat at the knee of Charles M. Russell. Due to a chance letter written to Russell, and which was answered with a typical illustrated reply, the young aspiring artist De Yong went to Montana in 1914. Joe was a frequent guest thereafter at the Russell Studio in Great Falls. In 1916 he began studying while working with C.M.R. De Yong was studying bronze casting in Santa Barbara at the time of Russell's death in 1926, and has since remained a Californian, active in the motion picture industry. In spite of severe physical handicaps as the result of menengifits, Joe has remained active as a fine western artist and technical adviser in Hollywood. He is planning what he calls a "Russell Roundup" in book form, based on his very substantial first-hand knowledge of the artistry of C.M.R. It should be a great tonic for those who want more GOOD MEDICINE about the acknowledged Master.



Montana the magazine of western history

"riverboat era" seen daily along the nearby city's riverfront, helped to make his reckless daydreams of far greater importance than regular attendance at school.

Finally in his mid-teens, repeated truancy and an impossibly poor scholastic record (coupled with endless stubborn opposition to parental authority) resulted in Charlie being reluctantly granted parental permission to "Go West, and grow up with the country!"—as Horace Greely had advised the young men of that time.

So it came about that in the late spring of 1880 there appeared in the remote, almost totally unsettled Judith Basin of central Montana, a pathetically equipped sixteen-year-old. His preparation for life on the frontier soon proved to be largely of a visionary sort. He was almost immediately fired from his first job-that of a lowly sheepherder! Yet luck was with him. Friendless, homeless, and soon hungry he was camping beside the trail without food or shelter, when the passing professional "meat hunter" Jake Hoover, sizing up this forlorn situation, casually took "The Kid" under his wing. Hoover allowed Charlie to help out around camp in return for grub and the sometimes shelter of a cabin roof. This arrangement, in young Russell's eyes, amounted to considerably more than a fair trade; and in time proved to be even more than that. He learned so much from Jake Hoover!

Thus from part-time meat skinner, packer, and camp-tender for Jake Hoover, "Kid" Russell (as he had become known locally) eventually graduated to intermittent periods of work as either horse wrangler, or "night hawk" for the roundup outfits of local cattle ranchers. His life long love of horses helped to fit him for this from the start. It was to cast the die for the balance of his

This heroic 7-foot statue of Charles M. Russell is the work of John Weaver, curator of the Historical Society of Montana. Cast in bronze, it is on display at the National Collection of Fine Arts at the Smithsonian Institution this month. It will be placed in Statuary Hall at the national capitol early next year to represent Montana in that great national Shrine.

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One of the first drawings that the 16-year old Russell did in Montana was this rather primitive, but sensitive watercolor now owned by Lloyd Raw of Lewistown.

life, since from there on (barring a brief, unsuccessful apprenticeship as a bull whacker) the ways of cowmen, cow ponies, and range cattle became deeply embedded in Russell's complex make-up.

Since roundup work was of a seasonal nature and further hampered on the northern ranges by the long winters (during which all but a select few hands were laid off) Charlie, always of a roving nature anyway, was apt to spend the winter in whatever manner necessity or chance came up with. But wherever he rambled, his "war bag" (either a seamless grain or flour-sack, in which cowpunchers customarily carried their small assortment of personal possessions) invariably included an odd sock. The war bag also unfailingly contained a few tubes of oil-paints, several pans of watercolors, one or two carefullyhusbanded brushes, together with an always-present lump of beeswax for modeling.



C.M.R. with a group of old-time cowmen. The man at his right is believed to be the late Tommy Larson, father-in-law of novelist A. B. Guthrie, Jr.

Unhurried, not given to worry, with such a few and simple tools. Charlie Russell tirelessly sketched, modeled, or painted whatever caught his eye. In addition, he possessed an instinctive feeling of kinship for Indians that bordered on second-sight. As a result, it is not surprising that he sometimes turned his back on the white man's life in order to share the lodges, meatpots, and ceremonies of the plains tribes who still roamed Northern Montana Territory and the bunchgrass-covered prairies of Southern Canada. His Indian-like cast of countenance, sincerity, and complete lack of any trace of the mercenary, invariably led to his being accepted without question. These associations resulted in Russell mastering the "hand talk," or Indian sign language, and also supplied countless ideas for paintings and models for the rest of his life.

Pathetically misfit as Charlie Russell may have appeared at the time of his arrival in Montana Territory, the once patronizingly - dubbed "Buckskin Kid" gradually developed into a strikingly picturesque individual who was ALL MAN-inside and out! Light-hearted and improvident, ribaldly humorous on occasion, it was Russell's rock-solid honesty and total lack of arrogance, as much as his genial, magnetic qualities that earned him a genuine open handed welcome wherever chance led him. In fact, by the time he met sixteen-yearold Nancy Cooper, whom he was soon to marry, the shaggy-haired, teen-age drifter of the early Eighties had developed into somewhat of a sagebrush celebrity, well known in the cow-camps, and cow-towns east of the Rockies from from the Bow River to the Yellowstone.

In the rag-tag, false fronted little outfitting points of that day, the few places open to the happy-go-lucky, homeless element of which Russell had long been a part—saloon, gambling-house, and honky-tonk—were invariably the best lighted, warmest, and most cheerful. As a result (since Charlie was never inclined to drink alone and he had become a semi-public character whose presence amounted to a trade-asset in any place where liquor was sold) he gradually acquired an additional talent; albeit one that promised neither honors nor dividends.

But as is sometimes the case where those marked by genius are concerned, the important forks in Charlie's train through life repeatedly bore indications of his being under the wing of a Guardian Angel; and at no time was such more clearly evident than in his choice of a life-partner and helpmate.

"Wide-open" as his personal life always was, there had been surprisingly few serious romantic entanglements and none of a nature to complicate or even cast a passing shadow on his brand new marriage.

Marriage saved Russell from the life of a "rounder." Even so, the inescapable problem of how to make enough of a living for two-in fact of an almost nonexistent market for his output-became an ever-present one. This situation was more readily recognized by Nancy than by her easy-going cowboy artist husband. In the uncertain months that followed, Charlie's guardian angel must have occasionally nudged someone's elbow. Somehow a few pictures sold, often at ridiculously low prices and usually barely in time to keep the kitchen cupboard from becoming completely bare. In any case, the Russells were soon forced to admit that their financial problem could only be solved in larger, more wide-awake surroundings - particularly at Great Falls, where they finally decided to locate.

Nancy was naturally smart, practical, and she possessed abundant charm. These qualities complemented Charlie's traits in an always helpful manner. In addition, Nancy soon developed business judgment of an extremely shrewd sort,



One of the classics of range-land literature is E. C. (Teddy Blue) Abbott's We Pointed Them North. Here is Teddy Blue with his pal, Charlie.

without which (along with her deftlyapplied guidance of his more personal affairs) her husband's success might have been considerably postponed, or even radically altered.

In Charlie's earlier struggles to catch the spirit of the half-wild life that was a part of his best days—working outside



When Pablo and Allard staged the last wild buffalo drive in the West on the Flathead Indian reservation, C.M.R., naturally, was there.





Left: Just before Russell went to Canada, to live with the Blood Indians he posed for this photo at Helena. Above, with some of his Blackfeet friends in the waning years of his life.

in wind, cold, and other distractions simply had to be put up with. Even his larger pictures of those first years were painted on a bunkhouse bench, or a temporarily idle poker table. In fact, his first studio was in the back room of a saloon. With the privacy and comfort supplied by the eventual acquirement of his now-celebrated log cabin studio in Great Falls, Charlie speedily increased the size, number and quality of his paintings.

As was to be expected, with greater local success, the Russells were eventually tempted to test their luck in greener pastures. New York finally was decided upon as their target. A decided gamble at best, it was even more so where Nancy herself was concerned, since (aside from a single trip to St. Louis, to meet Charlie's family) she had never been in any big city. The gamble proved an unqualified success, not only due to a number of gratifying sales at high prices, but it also resulted in Charlie gaining the attention of the editors of the foremost book and magazine publishing houses of the day.

With genuine talent, hard work, intelligent management, and undoubted luck. annual exhibitions in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles followed as a matter of course. These were augmented by a steadily growing number of direct sales to wealthy lovers of things Western, many of whom understood the quality and value of his art. It became obvious that Charlie Russell's star was definitely in the ascendant. This period culminated in his being commissioned to paint the mural, "Lewis and Clark Meeting the Flatheads" for the Montana state capitol, in Helena. And this achievement appears to have also marked a further unfolding in Russell's peculiar technical ability, particularly his bold use of color.

Although Russell was extremely simple—in fact, actually limited—in his knowledge of the technicalities of his craft, years of stubborn insistence upon expressing his inner-self in a completely natural manner finally set his work apart from that of every other artist in the field, regardless of their training or standing.

After 1905—with increased facility in all mediums which he turned to for the expression of his seemingly inexhaustible fund of always original subjects bringing the recognition that his work enjoyed—the Russells finally moved in

a circle that included Wall Street bankers, Pittsburgh steel magnates, moving picture stars, luminaries of the world of art, writing and the theatre (and as a result of a successful exhibition in London) even members of the English Nobility. In this company, select and strange though it was, the Russells moved with quiet assurance.

Never a blow-hard, and surely with none of the ham actor in his makeup. Charlie proved to be a born mixer, a raconteur par-excellence, and a real humorist of the Will Rogers, Mark Twain, Lincoln mold. He effortlessly became the center of interest in any group in which he found himself. But Russell did not make a habit of "calling his shots," according to the standing or quality of his company. He seemingly possessed the ability to directly and immediately reach the heart of his listeners on any level. And, whether among old friends or total strangers, such people invariably hung on his every word, like so many little kids. When his deadpan, delayed action manner of delivery finally put across a slow-fused "sneaker" their delight was unmistakable—often whole-heartedly explosive!

Blessed with an imagination that bordered on the mystical, coupled with an extremely retentive memory, there now appeared a deepening and refinement of his sometimes-harsh color. This can hardly be regarded as a wholly-personal fault. Absolute realism was an unshakable part of Russell's life code; and since such colors were, in many cases, characteristic of the conditions to be found at certain seasons, in his always clearly-remembered early-day surroundings, it is only natural that the artist embraced them.

Always the unconscious possessor of an ability to convey *mood*—best shown in his quieter subjects—he became noted, principally, for his ability to portray violent action, too. In fact, action became his *forte!* In addition, by a few swift strokes with pen or brush, often seemingly carelessly done—his ability



to reproduce "character," or surfacetexture (what the Chinese term: "The Spirit of the brush") became evident in the most minute details, and eventually amounted to Russell's personal hallmark.

But eventually, too, in such of his clay and wax models as were intentionally created for casting in bronze (a field in which he became widely known) Russell finally succeeded in capturing and combining the greater number of his most admirable qualities. Here appeared that indescribable *spirit*, such as characterizes the most brilliant performance by an actor or musician of outstanding ability. This intangible "something" is best illustrated by his magnificent bronze, "Spirit of Winter."

In the good years between 1910 and 1926, when Charlie Russell had developed into a full-fledged personal and artistic success from every possible angle, there was never any doubt about his wife's ability to keep pace with him in any company. Pretty as a young girl (and in the shared building of his success, increasingly self-confident) Nancy actually became beautiful with the passing years. She was graced with a vibrant, rich speaking voice. Then, too, she developed a charming, alert, intelligent and—when called for—apparently

straight-from-the-shoulder (yet shrewdly-calculated manner of "diplomaticmanipulation") that always got results. Nancy's ways were entirely foreign to Charlie's; yet they complemented his simple, trusting, unambitious nature. Even today, however, certain top-flight art dealers, accustomed to persuading and over-awing the meek, timid, or the inexperienced among artists - remain firmly convinced that Nancy's gloves, whether suede, buckskin, or velvet, actually contained a pair of brassknuckles. Actually the credit is all hers. She merely beat them at their own game!

But Nancy's greatest achievement in her husband's behalf was best summed up by his longtime friend Will Rogers, who drawled: "Nancy took an "o" out of Saloon, and made it read salon."

Charles Marion Russell eventually emerged, not only a first rank painter, sculptor and pen-and-ink artist, but a story-teller of professional calibre; a talented humorist and writer; and the concocter of considerable lasting doggerel originally intended to accompany Christmas cards and other messages. As a poet—usually of a semi-humorous sort, his few attempts at serious verse came out as simple and beyond doubt as beautifully as any of his great paintings. In fact, the originality of anything to which Russell turned his brilliant hand is now easily apparent.

But like any wholly self-trained creator, his genius also occasionally reflects uneven periods. Yet the "tops" of Russell's considerable lifetime output speaks for itself in any company where accuracy, documentation, conviction, spirit, emotion, color and craftsmanship—all employed in an understandable manner—play a vital part.

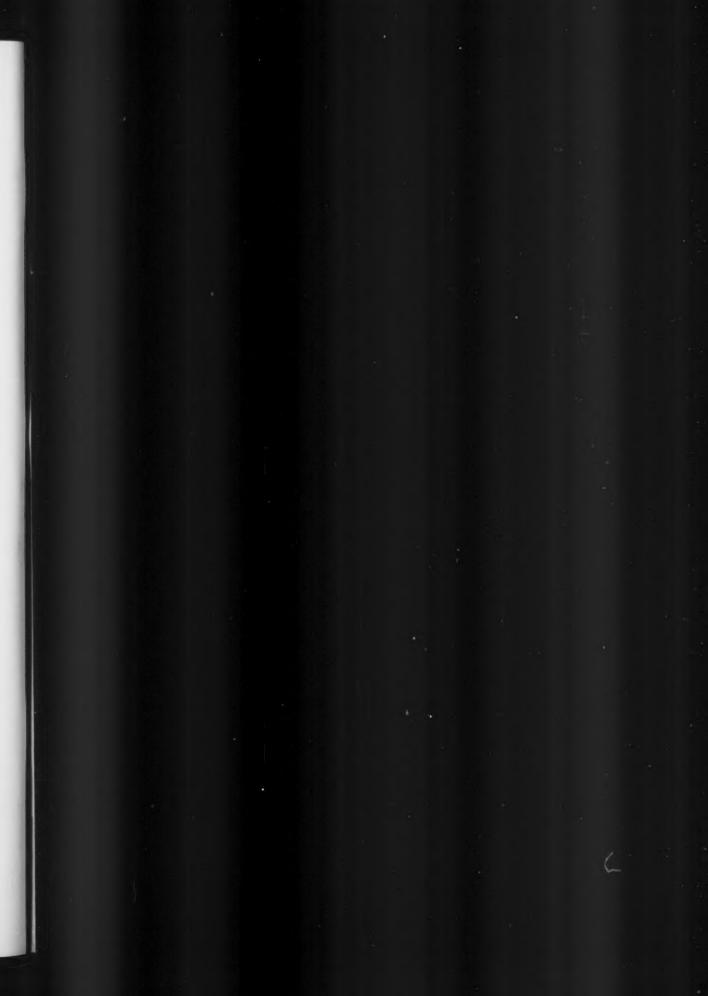
And, beyond this greatness Russell had still another ability—or gift, rather—upon which anyone who ever really knew him placed an even greater value: He was always "above-board," and in all ways "open to the sky." "His lodge," to use an Indian simile, "had but one door," which always faced the rising

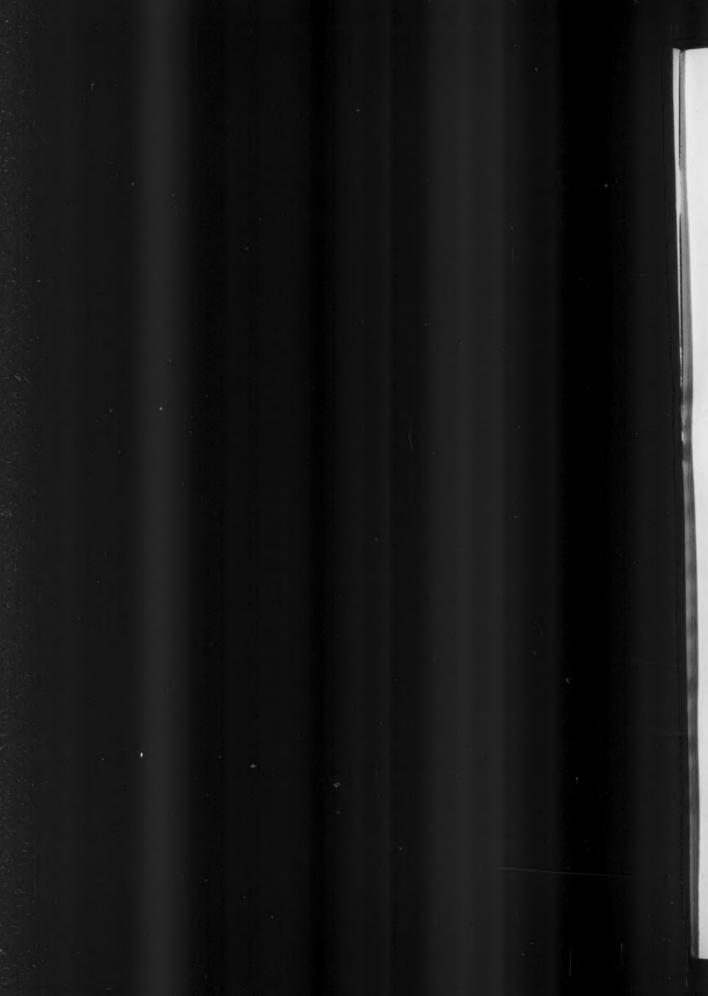
sun. Whenever, or wherever he traveled, he rode-since that was ever his way-where he could see, and be seen. There was no hugging of deep coulees by Charlie to avoid being "skylined;" no skulking in the badlands until darkness made safe the crossing of a ridge. And he never had reason to "pull a blanket-sneak" or craftily "brush out" his horse's tracks with a willow branch. Although his was a sometimes carelessly-made trail, particularly during his younger days (since almost anyone can accidentally stumble into a "dobie patch" or bog down at some creek ford) he still left no hurt and no unpaid debts along the way in all his 46 wonderful years in Old Montana.

Perhaps Charlie Russell was almost too kind, too mild, too honest, and far too innately decent to be a full-fledged member of the human race. He never had to stoop to "burning the country behind him." His trail through life was marked boldly by great friendships. While such friends were made without effort or calculation, yet they were at every level of society.

Russell was never inclined to "weigh" a man's position, wealth, or influence. He never intentionally "used" others for his own gain. He would, sometimes, reluctantly and rarely ask a favor for someone else in great need; but not for himself.

And so it is not to be wondered at that Charlie Russell's friends, Red Men, White Men, and Breeds of many mixtures "sided him, clear to the top of the Big Divide." To such friends it wouldn't have made the slightest difference if he had never managed to draw a line. Oddly enough, when in Charlie's company, folks generally forgot all about the genius on which his fame was based. The only explanation for this, I believe, may be found in the following (which like so many of his apparently off-hand remarks grows in depth and meaning on every repitition): "Nobody is important enough to feel important!" That was part of the real greatness of C. M. R.





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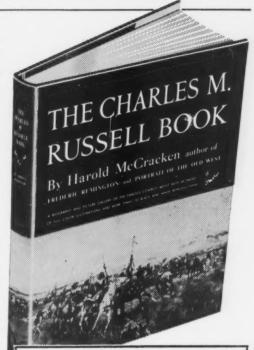
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